00047865

NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 13 February, 2016

LIBRARY
OF THE
BOMBAY
BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

Engraved by J Brown

JOHN STERLING

ESSAYS AND TALES,

BY

JOHN STERLING,

COLLECTED AND EDITED,

WITH A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE,

BY

17865

JULIUS CHARLES HARE, M.A.,

RECTOR OF HERSTMONCEUX.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NNA. t 3

LONDON
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

M.DCCC.XLVIII.

1838

47865

Ref 928.247

LONDON:
HARRISON AND CO., PRINTERS,
ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

	PAGE
Sketch of the Author's Life	i
Shades of the Dead	1
Alexander the Great	3
Joan of Arc	20
Wycliffe	30
Columbus	46
Gustavus Adolphus	60
Milton	73
Burns	87
Critical Essays	99
On Coleridge's Christabel	101
On the Broad Stone of Honour	111
On Napier's War in the Peninsula	120
On Montaigne	129
On Simonides	188
On Carlyle	252
Characteristics of German Genius	382
On Tennyson's Poems	422
Lecture, On the Worth of Knowledge	463

SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE.

HE, of whose mind and character a faint and very imperfect portrait is presented in these volumes, was the son of Edward and Hester Sterling, born at Kames Castle in the Isle of Bute on the 20th of July 1806, where his father, who was of Irish extraction, happened to be residing. In 1810 his parents removed to Llanblithian in Glamorganshire: here they remained till 1814. Thus John Sterling's childhood was nurtured amid forms of wild and romantic beauty; and his early boyhood was spent in a rich and finely wooded country.

The impressions made on him by the latter were deep and lasting. In a letter written nearly thirty years after, he says of one of his friends, that he had "lighted by accident on the quiet nook,—quiet as something patriarchal or starry,—where I passed my childhood, and which, I suppose, more than any other outward locality, belongs to my very nature, and will be found within me like Calais in the heart of Queen Mary. There are places that I love more

for the persons I have known in them; but still they are places, externals, accidents. Put the same people elsewhere; and of the places I should think but little. That green silent valley with its baby brooklet is very differently infused and incorporated in me; its grass to me the symbol and archetype of all verdure and tranquillity, a spiritual, not material thing; its clouds the only authentic ones of cloud-collecting Jove. For it was from those objects that I learnt to read and love the essential forms of nature and life. Strange it often is, in travelling through hundreds and thousands of miles, to think that every patch and hamlet which we pass with so much indifference, has the same metaphysical, religious value to those who were born and nurtured there.—The three or four years which I passed at Llanblithian have to me that indescribable charm and sacredness, which those years must possess for every one in whom the powers of imagination and reflection have been at all happily cultivated. The spot of earth which supplied the first pictures of nature and of human life that I can in the least recall, and where dawned my consciousness of the feelings and aspirations, the frailties and inward trials which must now for ever characterize me,—this place

has an importance for me beyond that of London, where I have gained most of my knowledge, and of Rome, which has best fulfilled the visions of my fancy."

While he was here, he used to say, he distinctly remembered having speculated on points of philosophy, and especially on the idea of Duty, which presented itself to him in this way. *If I could save my papa and mama from being killed, I know I should at once do it. Now why? To be killed would be very painful; and yet I should give my own consent to being killed.* The solution presented itself as a dim awe-stricken feeling of unknown obligation. It is remarkable that he did not connect this perplexity with anything he had been told of right and wrong, or of God, heaven, or hell, or at all imagine that in this could lie the key to the mystery. Here he had several companions whose strong influence on his mind and heart he thought he could clearly trace in after years; and with characteristic ardour he acknowledged the benefit.

In the autumn of 1814, when peace was restored, the family went over to France. They resided at Passy for seven months, where the entire change in their life surprised and excited him. He felt the power of that busier

life, with which he was now brought in contact. The new, he said, was poured on his senses and understanding, not in a stream, but a Niagara cataract; and he was at a time of life to receive its animating, expanding influences, though he could comprehend but a small part of what every day presented. They were living here very quietly and happily without any remarkable incidents, when news arrived one afternoon that Napoleon had landed in France. They were at once involved in the hurry and alarm of the other English; and after some terrible suspense they started for the coast in a large carriage with a single pair of horses for the journey. It seemed perilous; but they reached Dieppe in safety, where his father joined them, after seeing Bonaparte's entrance into Paris, and observing the depressed looks of the people, and the frantic exaltation of the troops. In the autumn of 1815 they settled in London.

From his birth he was a very delicate child, reared with much difficulty by his mother's devoted care. The pulmonary disease, which at last terminated his life, was always hovering near him; and he passed few years without some threatening indications. Hence he was unable to go through the ordinary hard discipline of a public

school, but was sent, as more favorable intervals of health allowed, to several schools, among others to Dr. Burney's at Greenwich. He afterwards spent some time under the tuition of Dr. Waite at Blackheath, and of Dr. Trollope, the master of Christ's Hospital.

Among the anecdotes which I have heard of his boyhood, the following seem characteristic enough to be worth recording. He used to relate that, when he was about nine years old, he was much struck by his master's telling him that the word *sincere* was derived from the practice of filling up flaws in furniture with wax, whence *sine cera* came to mean *pure, not vampt up.* This explanation, he said, gave him great pleasure, and abode in his memory, as having first shown him that there is a reason in words as well as in other things: nor was it the worse for this purpose from having been drawn from the practice of Monmouth Street, rather than of the primeval upholsterers of ancient Italy. About the same time, having been desired to write a description of a storm in Latin hexameters, he tried to conceive what would be the real appearance and effects of a great tempest in a landscape, and, among other things, dwelt on the terror of all kinds of

animals, especially of the lion, so frightened by the thunder as to let the deer fly past him without attempting to seize them. His father, to whom he shewed the verses, said this was a good thought; and these words of praise recurred to his mind as an encouragement, when he was disheartened by the fear that he should never be able to do anything. He also remembered that, when about ten years old, at school, he was first imprest by the merit of a complicated and sonorous sentence. He was standing near the head boy, when a new usher asked some question about a small closed bookcase. The boy answered that it contained a collection for the use of the school, which for some reason had been locked up and disused. "Formerly," he said, "it was managed by a committee of the boys, and, though on a small scale, was conducted, I assure you, sir, with all the regularity that would be found in the largest institutions." The elegance with which these clauses were put together and varied, and the spirit of the personal address in the middle, struck him as admirable, and, though it exprest no thought or image, lingered in his mind after much that was more memorable had passed away. Long afterwards, indeed through life, he was haunted by a love of grandi-

loquence, and was fond of giving his style a rhetorical elevation by a less natural arrangement of the words, so that to write simply always cost him peculiar watchfulness and effort.

It was while he was at this school, in his eleventh year, that he made his first attempt in literature. He had a brother about three years younger, Edward, of whom he was very fond, and who was taken away from school in consequence of a cold caught after the measles. The two elder brothers went home from time to time. On one of these occasions John had been pondering what he could do to give any pleasure to his darling brother, when he bethought himself that Edward was fond of stories, and that he might write out one which he had read, and thus make a little book for him. So he made a book by folding up a sheet of paper to the size of half a card; and on these tiny pages he began to write out the story of Valentine and Orson after a version of his own: to render it still more like a book, he wrote it in Roman letters. He had not finished it, but brought home what he had done, in the hope of pleasing Edward. The little boy however was sinking fast, and was unable to take any notice of his brother's book. An infant sister was also fading from the world.

They both died in the same week. The loss of Edward was an agonizing and lasting grief to John. For years Edward's image haunted him. He used to say to himself, *Edward is near me now. Edward is watching me. He knows what I am doing and thinking,—is sad for my faults. I must, I will strive to do what he would approve of.* These feelings, he thought in after life, had taught him better than anything else, how deeply rooted in human nature is the tendency to the worship of saints, to the beatification and deification of those whom death has hidden from our outward eyes. A reminiscence of these feelings must have been floating before his mind, when he wrote the story of *the Lycian Painter.*

His father was the author of some letters which appeared in the *Times* under the signature of *Vetus* in the year 1812, and which excited a good deal of curiosity about their origin; and from that time forward he was much engaged as a political writer. Thus John Sterling was early led to take a lively interest in political affairs, an interest which afterwards mounted from the temporary questions of party politics, to those which concern the moral well-being of a people. In later years, speaking of the crude opinions on morals and politics and taste, which

he held when he first went to College, he told me that, while a boy, he read through the whole Edinburgh Review from its beginning; a diet than which hardly any could yield less wholesome food for a young mind, and which could scarcely fail to puff it up with the wind of self-conceit.

In the autumn of 1824 he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became one of the pupils at my classical lectures. Here I was soon attracted by the marks of his genial intellect and spirit. A good scholar indeed, in the common sense of that phrase, he never was: few Englishmen become so, without going through a regular course of scholastic instruction. But he was something better, inasmuch as he soon shewed that he could relish and delight in the beauty of Greek poetry, and the practical and speculative wisdom of Greek history and philosophy. Thus began an acquaintance, which subsequently ripened into one of the most precious friendships vouchsafed to me during my life.

Here let me mention an instance of the self-forgetting energy and impetuosity which distinguished him even from his childhood. One day, while we were at lecture, we were alarmed

by a cry that the King's Court, the building of which was not quite completed, was on fire. Of course all the members of the College rushed to the spot, to render such help as they could. The undergraduates formed in lines from the gateway to the river, passing buckets to and from the fire-engine, and behaved with admirable alacrity and order. Having to go down the line for the purpose of giving some directions, I saw that the last person in it was Sterling, standing up to his waist in the river. I reproved him for thus endangering a life, which seemed to hang by so slight a thread, and for occupying the most laborious, and to him very hurtful post, when his weakness required that he should have taken one of the easier. But he only said laughing, *Somebody must stand in the river; therefore why not I?* To be foremost in the hour of risk, to shrink from no difficulty, from no labour, up to his utmost strength, and even beyond it, by which a friend could be served, or good done, was ever his principle and his practice.

In the regular course of the studies at the University, Sterling did not take much part. Of the genial young men who go to Cambridge, many do not. This is greatly to be regretted.

For even where the alternative is not blank idleness, or intellectual self-indulgence and dissipation, it is a misfortune for a young man to lose the disciplinary influence of a prescribed system, and the direction and encouragement of intelligent guides. It is perilous to set sail on such a sea as that of Knowledge, with so many sirens to lure us astray, and so many whirlpools to swallow us up; and yet to have no compass or pilot. The blame however in such cases does not rest wholly with the pupils. One of the mischievous consequences from the prevalence of that hollow fallacy, that emulation is the chief spring and spur of intellectual activity, has been to narrow the range of studies to such as afford the greatest facilities for instituting a comparison among the numerous competitors, that is, to such as present definite, tangible results, measurable grain by grain. Where a positive scale is adopted, this is not requisite: but where each candidate is to have his relative place assigned to him, the subject matter of the competition must be determinate, and of such a kind that the proficiency of each in it may be ascertainable with exactitude. It is true, this is quite impossible: lesser merits will often be estimated above higher ones; and much will ever depend

upon chance: but hence it has come to pass that almost the only study especially fostered by the University, and rewarded by its honours, except the various branches of mathematical science, is classical philology, of a somewhat meagre kind, hardly rising beyond grammatical criticism, and the minute details of archeology. But if a certain class of studies is specially encouraged, those which are left without this encouragement are in a manner discouraged. The contrast of the sunshine deepens the shade. When a race is going on, they who do not join in it are mostly mere bystanders with no higher object than amusement. At all events they cannot partake in the benefit of being swayed and borne along by a common impulse: they lose the stimulus, so powerful with the young, of sympathy in a common pursuit: and if they follow any peculiar studies by themselves, they are thereby set in a kind of opposition to authority and established institutions, are led to look upon them with dislike, if not with disdain, and to feel an overweening confidence in their own wisdom. It is often made a matter of complaint, that men of the world, men who act a prominent part in public life, feel little affection for their University. For this there are various grounds;

some of them connected with the ordinary temper of the years spent there, which is seldom reverential: but one cause assuredly is, that the University in many cases has done next to nothing for them. Under a conviction of this sort, Sterling, when he left Cambridge, wrote of it in the *Athenæum* as miserably failing in fulfilling its office, and took a warm interest in the new London University, in which he hoped that what seemed to him the capital defects of our older Universities might be remedied. This may be censured by some as presumptuous; but it arose from the feeling that the University had not supplied him with the discipline and teaching which he needed.

The greatest benefit, and the most lasting derived from the years spent at College, often lies in the friendships formed there. This was eminently the case with Sterling. Of those with whom he lived familiarly, several continued his intimate friends through life, especially Richard Trench and Frederic Maurice, both of whom he loved and revered with an affection such as can only spring from a strong and deep heart. He often declared that to the latter, with whom he was afterwards connected by their marrying two sisters, he owed more than

to any other man except Coleridge. Writing to me in 1829, while they were working together for the *Athenæum*, he said: "Of what good you have found in the *Athenæum*, by far the larger part is attributable to him. When I have done any good, I have seldom been more than a patch of sand to receive and retain the impression of his footstep." And again, speaking of the Essays which open these volumes: "The *Shades of the Dead* are mine; but all that is in them was learnt from Coleridge or Maurice." With the help of the latter, he gradually emancipated himself from that crampt and cramping system of opinions in philosophy and taste, which he had brought with him to College; but against which, incompatible as they were with depth or largeness of thought, even if left to himself, his spirit must sooner or later have revolted. Sooner or later he could not fail to cry to their advocates, *Let the dead bury their dead.*

At that time it was beginning to be acknowledged by more than a few that Coleridge is the true sovereign of modern English thought. The *Aids to Reflection* had recently been published, and were doing the work for which they are so admirably fitted; that book, to which many, as has been said by one of Sterling's chief friends,

"owe even their own selves." Few felt this obligation more deeply than Sterling. "To Coleridge (he wrote to me in 1836) I owe *education.* He taught me to believe that an empirical philosophy is none, that Faith is the highest Reason, that all criticism, whether of literature, laws, or manners, is blind, without the power of discerning the organic unity of the object." He became an enthusiastic admirer and reverer of his great master; the riches of whose wisdom he, in his earlier writings, was continually asserting and proclaiming, as is apparent even in the portion of them incorporated in this collection. When an opportunity occurred, he sought out the old man in his oracular shrine at Highgate, and often saw him in the last years of his life; and he was one of the two disciples who attended his funeral, my own duties rendering it impossible for me to make a third. It is to be regretted that he did not preserve an account of Coleridge's conversations with him; for he was capable of representing their depth, their ever varying hues, their sparkling lights, their oceanic ebb and flow; of which his published Table-talk hardly gives the slightest conception. Unfortunately Sterling merely took notes of his first interview with Coleridge; but these are the only record I have seen,

which enables one at all to apprehend how his wonderful combination of philosophical and poetical powers manifested themselves in his discourse. Hence I doubt not that many readers will be gratified if I insert them here.

"Mr. Coleridge happened to lay his hand upon a little old engraving of Luther with four German verses above it. He said, 'How much better this is than many of the butcher-like portraits of Luther, which we commonly see! He is of all men the one whom I especially love and admire.' Pointing to the first words of the German verses, he explained them, *Luther, the dear hero.* 'It is singular, (he said,) how all men have agreed in assigning to Luther the *heroic* character; and indeed it is certainly most just. Luther, however wrong in some of his opinions, was always right in design and spirit. In translating his ideas into conceptions, he always understood something higher and more universal than he had the means of expressing. He did not bestow too much attention on one part of man's nature to the exclusion of the others; but gave its due place to each,—the intellectual, the practical, and so forth. He is great, even where he is wrong,—even in the sacramental controversy,

the most unhappy in which he engaged; for his idea of Christ's body becoming infinite by its union with the godhead is entirely wrong.' Some one mentioned Calvin. He said 'Calvin was undoubtedly a man of talent; I have a great respect for him; he had a very logical intellect; but he wanted Luther's powers.'

"He then began to speak of landscape-gardening, in consequence of some remark about the beautiful view behind the house in which he resides. 'We have gone too far in destroying the old style of gardens and parks. There was a great deal of comfort in the thick hedges, which always gave you a sheltered walk during winter. There is certainly a propriety in the gradual passing away of the works of man in the neighbourhood of a home. The great thing is to discover whether the scenery is such that the country seems to belong to man, or man to the country. Now among the lakes of Westmoreland man evidently belongs to the country: the very cottages seem merely to rise out of, and to be growths of, the rock. But the case is different in a country where everything speaks of man, houses, corn-fields, cattle. There your improvements ought to be in conformity with the character of the place. Man is so in love with

intelligence, that where he is not intelligent enough to discover it, he will impress it. Some of the finest views about here (Highgate) are only to be seen from among the most wretched habitations. Luther said truly: *How different is a rich country from a happy country!* A rich country is always an unhappy, miserable, degraded country.'

"He then went into a long exposition of the evils of commerce and manufactures; the argument of which, I think, is to be found in one of the Lay Sermons. In the course of it he took occasion to say that the Legislature is defective. 'I don't mean anything about the nonsense of universal suffrage; but the land-proprietors have too great a proportion of power. Land is something fixed and tangible: if one man have more of it, another must have less. But this other kind of wealth, which is founded in the National Debt and so forth,—one man's having a million of it does not prevent another man's getting two millions of it; nay, it rather makes it more probable that he will do so. Thirty or forty years ago, it would have been a disgrace to a merchant to be seen on the Stock Exchange. Now it is thought nothing of. There are only two remedies for the evil of our excessive increasing popula-

tion. We have not virtue enough for the one, which is a plan of general and continued emigrations, in which the people would be perpetually going forth, headed by the priest and the noble. In every parish a certain portion of every family ought to live under the knowledge that at a certain age they were to emigrate. The other remedy is a perfectly free trade in corn; but this would only do for a time. More rich men are springing up in the country than the country can support: the Regent's Park is covered as it were with an enchanted city.

"'The division of labour has proceeded so far even in literature, that people do not think for themselves; their review thinks for them.' He said to a person in the company: 'Your friend Mr.——, was here some time ago. He is evidently a man of great talent. We had a long dispute together about laughter. Mr.——was maintaining that notion of Hobbes's, that laughter arises from contempt. My theory was, that it always springs from the sudden experience of a pleasure, for which the nerves are not sufficiently prepared, and that laughter is the little convulsion by which nature gets rid of the struggle.'

"The population of Highgate, and the number of churches and chapels in it happened to be

mentioned, when Coleridge said: 'There never was such a mistake as the Government has committed in letting the population outstrip the churches to such an extent. They forgot that religion, even in its exterior forms, is the centre of gravity. Christendom is so obviously superior to all the rest of the world in everything,—science, civilization, power,—that it is impossible to doubt of the mere external advantages of religion.' But, it was said, how much of Christianity is there in France! 'Why,' replied Coleridge, 'there are a great many queer Christians even here; but still religion exists as a power in the country. London has a great weight after all among mankind. People perhaps are not themselves religious; but they give their half guineas, and they are civil. Christianity brings immense advantages to a savage. It is an evident preferment for him. The missionaries have done a great deal for us in clearing up our notions about savage nations. What an immense deal of harm Captain Cook's *Voyages* did in that way! Sailors, after being a long time at sea, found a fertile island, and a people of lax morals, which were just the things they wanted; and of course there never were such dear, good, kind, amiable people. We know now that they were more detestably licentious

than we could have imagined. And then the romance of the Pelew Islanders! There scarcely ever existed such a set of blood-thirsty barbarians. Savages have a notion of higher powers than their own all around them; but that is a part of superstition, not religion. The personality of the Deity is the great thing. The ancients were Spinozists: they could not help seeing an energy in Nature. This was the *anima mundi sine centro* of the philosophers. The people of course changed it into all the forms that their imagination could supply. The religion of the philosophers was *Pantheism*, and that of the people *Polytheism*. They knew nothing of a creative power: at first there was Chaos and Night; and what produced the universe they could not tell. The gods were merely the first birth of Chaos. This is very evident also in that notion of the Stoics, that after ten thousand years the gods required to be formed again. Even Plato, who alone of them all had any idea of God, says that it is very hard to discover, and *impossible to communicate it.* And I have no doubt that the first great apostasy, the building of the Tower of Babel, consisted in erecting a temple to the heavens, to the universe. The first sovereigns of all countries were priests,

and after them warriors. This is clear from the Northern traditions of Odin, the Sagas, and so forth. When the families of the priests intermarried with the children of the more ignorant people, their offspring applied their superior intelligence and knowledge to the purposes of conquest: hence the great conquests recorded of old. We never hear of such conquests by savage nations, when they are not directed by the wisdom of a priesthood.

"'I lately heard Dr. Chalmers preach an excellent sermon. Thinking so differently from him upon religion as I do, I was nevertheless much pleased. He enforced and illustrated very strongly that provision of the Deity, which makes punishment inseparable from sin. The great difficulty is to reconcile the efficacy of our good works and the necessity of Christ's atonement.'

"He then gave a long and very interesting account of Irving's notions about the second coming of our Lord, and of the book on the subject which he has lately translated from the Spanish of a Chilian Jesuit. 'He learned Spanish for the purpose of reading it. His introduction is one of the purest and most beautiful pieces of English I have read for many years. It was quite restoring to me. It is wonderful how, in the

course of three or four years since the publication of his *Orations*, he has completely changed his style. They were full, as I told him, of Scoticisms, Gallicisms, and all *isms* but Anglicisms. In the Introduction to this book I only detected two errors; one of them the phrase *open up a subject*, which, I suppose, is an innovation of the sectarian pulpits. It is quite in the full flowing manner of our old writers, yet without imitation. His style is quite his own. I care not for his opinions: as to them I differ from him entirely: but I shall always say, Mr. Irving is a noble creature. It is unfortunate that he thinks these views of his about the second coming of Christ of such importance as to induce him to discuss them in the pulpit, while so many of his congregation must be hungering for the mere common bread of life. Yet the book he has translated is a most powerful piece of reasoning, except where they rely upon a part of Daniel and the Revelation. It is there Mr. Irving fails. It is clear, from certain passages in the Gospels and in St. Paul, that the Apostles interpreted the ancient prophecies as foreshowing a second advent of Christ in the body upon earth. It is for Mr. Irving's opponents to show reason for dissenting from the Apostles on this point.'

"Mr. Coleridge is not tall, and rather stout: his features, though not regular, are by no means disagreeable; the hair quite grey; the eye and forehead very fine. His appearance is rather old-fashioned; and he looks as if he belonged not so much to this, or to any age, as to history. His manner and address struck me as being rather formally courteous. He always speaks in the tone and in the gesture of common conversation, and laughs a good deal, but gently. His emphasis, though not declamatory, is placed with remarkable propriety. He speaks perhaps rather slowly, but never stops, and seldom even hesitates. There is the strongest appearance of conviction, without any violence in his manner. His language is sometimes harsh, sometimes careless, often quaint, almost always, I think, drawn from the fresh delicious fountains of our elder eloquence. I have no doubt that the diction of much that I have reported is different from Coleridge's, and always of course vastly inferior. I have treasured up as many of his phrases as I could; they will easily be recognised. On one occasion he quoted a line of his own poetry, saying, 'If I may quote a verse of mine written when I was a very young man.' It was something to this effect: 'They kill too

slow for men to call it murder.' He happened to mention several books in the course of his remarks; and he always seemed inclined to mention them goodnaturedly.

"I was in his company about three hours; and of that time he spoke during two and three quarters. It would have been delightful to listen as attentively, and certainly easy for him to speak just as well for the next forty-eight hours. On the whole his conversation, or rather monologue, is by far the most interesting I ever heard or heard of. Dr. Johnson's talk, with which it is obvious to compare it, seems to me immeasurably inferior. It is better balanced and scrubbed, and more ponderous with epithets; but the spirit and flavour and fragrance, the knowledge and the genius are all wanting. The one is a house of brick, the other a quarry of jasper. It is painful to observe in Coleridge, that, with all the kindness and glorious far-seeing intelligence of his eye, there is a glare in it, a light half unearthly, half morbid. It is the glittering eye of the *Ancient Mariner*. His cheek too shows a flush of over-excitement, the red of a storm-cloud at sunset. When he dies, another, and one of the greatest of their race, will rejoin the few

Immortals, the ill understood and ill requited, who have walked this earth."

Powerful too was the impression produced on Sterling by the great poet, whose name is always associated with that of Coleridge, and whose writings have exercised so salutary an influence on the most genial minds of the present generation. Ample evidence of this, both direct and indirect, is to be found in Sterling's writings, especially in *the Sexton's Daughter*, in which the inspiration derived from Wordsworth may be discerned throughout; and when he first saw Wordsworth, in 1828, he wrote thus to a friend: "More than all *the Excursion* and the Platonic Ode is developed in his domelike forehead. And his manner and conversation are full of the pleasant playful sincerity and kindness, which are so observable in his works. The utter absence of pretension in all he says and looks is very striking. He does not say many things to be remembered; and most of his observations are chiefly noticeable for their delicate taste, strong good sense, and stout healthy diction, rather than for imagery or condensed principles of philosophy. You see in him the repose or the sport,

but neither the harlequinade, nor the conflict of genius. I believe he has long turned the corner of life; and yet there is not about him the slightest tendency to be wearied or disgusted with human nature, or to be indifferent towards the common little objects, occurrences, and people round him. All his daily fireside companionable sympathies are as sensitive and good-humoured as ever. Is not this fine? and what one would hope to see in great men; if one had not so much reason to fear being generally disappointed? His talk is as different from Coleridge's as can be, and, if considered separately from what we know of the man, is certainly far less interesting. Coleridge's monologue is perhaps better even than his writing: for it is as profound, as nobly and precisely expressed; while it exhibits more of the union of poetry and philosophy than any of his books either in verse or prose, and is perhaps more fresh and flowing, and a little more adapted to ordinary comprehension than *the Friend* or *the Biographia;* not because it deals with less important subjects, or treats them less thoroughly, but because it abounds rather more in illustration, displays more variety of style, and is helped by the most expressive voice in the world, by the most speaking face, and an eye the very

organ of benevolent wisdom. Coleridge is the philosopher in conversation by being all philosopher, and Wordsworth by not affecting to be it at all. The conversation of the latter springs from and is coloured by the immediate circumstances, is full of observation and kindliness, and refers directly to the people he is among. Coleridge, without much attention to time or place, pours out his mind in reflection; and it is only marked by particular circumstances or facts, inasmuch as it seems to have habitually absorbed the outward world into its own substance."

At College moreover it was that Sterling's eyes opened to discern the beauty of Greek poetry and art. What a lively feeling he had for these, appears from the tales on Greek subjects, written shortly after, which are printed in the second of these volumes. Nor was it merely by Greek poetry that he was fascinated. As the tendencies of his mind were rather reflective and speculative, than intuitive and productive, he was delighted with the Greek historians and philosophers, as far as he knew them: and though, as I have already said, he was not eminent as a scholar, few Englishmen have been more powerfully imprest and acted upon by Niebuhr's *Roman History*. Writing to me in 1829, he

said: "It was the first help I had in getting out of the slough of Benthamism; and I never think of the book without the kind of feeling which one enjoys in recollecting some exquisite face or landscape seen years ago in a mood of tranquil sympathy. Till I met with Niebuhr, I always hated the Romans, and everything connected with them; and I owe to him alone that I can now take pleasure in thinking of the nation which fills the largest space on the canvas of the world's history." Niebuhr's devout love of Truth, which shrank from no toil, no exertion, to gain a satisfactory conviction, even on a petty question of grammar or archeology, and which was still more clearly manifested by his unrivalled judicial candour in making use of his materials, so as never to strain any tittle of evidence beyond what it could legitimately bear, was exactly after Sterling's own heart. Not indeed that he ever sought out Truth by similar laborious processes: this was not the bent of his mind; nor would his weak and irritable constitution have allowed of it. But by sacrifices of other kinds he did seek Truth, with a stern self-oblivion, and rejoiced in offering them up to her. In a letter in 1843, speaking of Arnold, one of the Englishmen of our days whom he most admired, he says: "There is

a singleness of eye in his writings, which is as like what one conceives of the Deity as a star to the sun. I know not what higher praise could be given to any mortal; and it is due to Niebuhr, whom he so much admired, as surely as to himself." Soon after, in a time of affliction, he wrote: "I have found Niebuhr's letters more congenial and attractive than any other book. Such a monument of diligent self-formation as his life presents I do not know elsewhere. His feeling for the Noble and the True is certainly altogether heroic." So again, in the last June of his life, having just read the biography of Arnold, he writes: "I like, respect, and love the man, much more than the book, which strikes me as too bulky for the matter. Or is it that, knowing the main points, I could not fairly look for the pleasure of novelty? I certainly was disappointed at the narrowness of his range of thought, his entire want of imagination, of humour, of philosophy, and even of philosophical criticism. And yet how noble a man he was practically! and how clear his view of the moral evils of England! But it is men like Niebuhr and Schleiermacher who have my whole heart. I never ran through a book with more delight than the two volumes of Niebuhr's *Lectures on Roman*

History." What especially charmed him was the manner in which Niebuhr had revived the Roman nation, with all its conflicting interests, the struggles of its parties, and its heroic characters, investing those who had long been little else than themes of declamation, or heroes of rhetorical dramas, with living flesh and blood. On this point he speaks in his *Essay on the Characteristics of German Genius*, p. 419; and these volumes contain ample evidence how well he apprehended and appreciated what has been effected by German philology for the resurrection of the spirit of antiquity.

In the debating society at Cambridge, Sterling was one of the most prominent members. I have been told by several of the most intelligent among his contemporaries, that, of all the speakers they ever heard, he had the greatest gift of natural eloquence. On this I never had adequate means for forming a judgement; but his conversational powers were certainly among the most brilliant I have witnessed. In carrying on an argument I have known no one comparable to him. In addition to the secondary merits of a rich command of language and illustration, he used to show a mastery of the subject matter, proceeding from the singular clearness of his understanding and

readiness of his knowledge, which, even when his adversaries had chosen ground where they fancied themselves at home, took them by surprise, and confounded them. He seemed like a skilful chess-player, who knew by anticipation how his opponent was going to move, nay, foresaw a long series of moves, and, like Socrates, would push him on, move after move, till he suddenly found himself checkmated. At times too he would maintain a contest of this sort against half a dozen antagonists at once, holding the reins of four or six in hand without letting them get entangled, answering all in turn, and having a sufficient answer for each.

After residing somewhat more than a year at Trinity College, Sterling followed the example of his friend Maurice in migrating to Trinity Hall, with the intention of graduating in Law: but he left Cambridge in 1827, without taking a degree; for which purpose he returned in the autumn of 1833, when he was about to enter into orders. During the first four years of the intervening period, he resided chiefly in London, employing himself actively in literature. In those years, one of his dearest friends, Richard Trench, writes to me, "I saw him often; and to him, and my intercourse with him in that crisis of

life, I feel that I owe more than to any other living man. It was impossible to come in contact with his noble nature, without feeling oneself in some measure ennobled, and lifted up, as I ever felt when I left him, into a higher region of objects and aims than that in which one is tempted habitually to dwell." Like testimony to the benefits derived from intercourse with him could be borne by numbers. There are persons who, by a certain felicity of nature, through a peculiar combination of magnanimity and generosity with gentleness and open-hearted frankness, loving to give the very best of what they have, are gifted with a sort of divining rod for drawing out what is hidden in the hearts of their brethren; and of such persons I have known no finer example than Sterling. For in him, as in such persons it must ever be, the nobleness of his outward look and gesture and manner betokened that of his spirit, and showed that the whole man, heart and soul and mind, was uttering himself in his eloquent speech. Hence many witnesses might be collected out of all classes of society, who would rejoice to declare, that to him they owed the first awakening of a higher being, that from him they learnt what they were, and what they ought to be.

In 1828 he wrote a good deal in the *Athenæum*, which in the latter half of that year, and throughout the next, was conducted by his friend Maurice, with his assistance. It assumed a tone far above that of any similar paper: indeed I hardly know any English journal, which has borne such consistent witness to high philosophical and moral principles, as this did under their management. From Sterling's contributions I have selected several for insertion in these volumes, *the Shades of the Dead, the Travels of Theodore Elbert*, and half a dozen tales. About the authorship of one or two of the latter I may possibly have been mistaken; as in their case I have been guided solely by internal evidence: this however seemed to me decisive. These writings show powers of imagination and reflection very remarkable in a young man of two and twenty. Perhaps the most striking and precious quality in them is the deep sympathy with the errors and faults, and even with the sins of mankind, a sympathy which, in different modes, characterizes the works of his two great friends, Mr. Maurice and Mr. Carlyle, more than almost any writers I know of; and which was a main cause of his warm admiration for the latter. This sympathy was awakened by very different contemplations,

and proceeded from very different grounds, from those which lead our great poet to lament "What man has made of man;" but it concurred with him in that lamentation. It arose from the deep consciousness of partaking in the same sinful nature: but, while it acknowledged the power of circumstances in making men what they are, it did not therefore exonerate the will from its moral responsibility; nor would it have left men to continue what they are. It yearned with passionate intensity, not merely to improve their circumstances, but also to speak to and emancipate their will, by calling out the conscience from its state of stagnation, or of maimed, crushed inertness. Had Sterling's health allowed him to lead an active life, to this work he would have devoted it. This was what he always set before him, when he was most himself. When he was fain to content himself with lower aims, it arose in a great measure from the debility and comparative languor occasioned by the encroachments of disease.

All the while however he was well aware how hurtful the practice of writing in journals is, especially for young, half-formed minds. "The desultory, fragmentary kind of thinking, (he said in a letter to me,) to which I am too prone, is

encouraged by the habit of composition for a weekly journal; and I feel so strongly the necessity of educating myself, that I should be glad if it were possible not to let a line of mine be printed for some years to come. But I fear this cannot be. I must go on sacrificing the future to the present, grinding my seed-corn, and cutting down my saplings. The time is not yet come in my case for acting directly upon others." Then, after mentioning a projected tour in Germany, he adds: "To spend some time at Berlin or Göttingen would undoubtedly be of great advantage to me, inasmuch as at all events it would take me away from the busy idleness of London, and the wretched technicalities of trade literature. I am not so sure that I should gain more by going abroad, than by withdrawing myself, if possible, from anything like my present occupations, and calmly studying for inward, instead of outward ends."

In the autumn of 1828 Sterling spent some weeks in Paris. The impressions produced on him by what he saw of the French character, are thus described in a letter:—"I have very imperfect means of forming any judgement as to what a *man* is in France. I am inclined to believe that

such a thing exists there, and will hereafter become more common. But what Coleridge calls 'the manly character' is certainly very rare, and in the best specimens very imperfect. This you will readily believe, when I tell you that, among the men a little older than ourselves, but not yet admissible to the Chamber, who, of course, are the strength of the country, the prevailing tone is that of ridicule and incredulity; not I mean merely as regards religion, but as to *ideas* in general. No people are abler in applying means to ends; but religion, the arts, and philosophy are in a miserable condition, not because they are in embryo, but because they have arrived at a stunted maturity. By the statement both of Roman Catholics and Protestants, the men who care for adhering to any acceptation of Christianity, are not a tenth of the whole nation. But it is much more striking to hear the way in which religion is commonly talked about; and the most melancholy circumstance of all is, that the best school of French teachers, those who conduct the *Globe*, are not at all inclined to do more than treat Christianity as a highly respectable form of 'the religious idea,' without having, in general, a notion that it should be made a matter of personal concern to every man. The continental philosophy

of the eighteenth century undervalued Christianity, because it looked upon all religions with equal contempt. The continental philosophy of the nineteenth undervalues it, because it looks at all with equal respect, and is as far in the one case as in the other, from comprehending rightly the wants of the individual mind. Cousin makes it the peculiar glory of our epoch, that it endeavours to comprehend the mind of all other ages. But I fear it must be the tendency of his philosophy, while it examines what all other philosophies were, to prevent us from being anything ourselves. We must do more than clearly understand in what way the various religions have resolved such great problems, as those of freewill and necessity (for instance); we must also do it for ourselves. We must live, not only for the past, but also for the present. Herein is the great merit of Coleridge: and I confess for myself, I would rather be a believing Jew or Pagan, than a man who sees through all religions, but looks not with the eyes of any."

About this time Sterling took an enthusiastic interest in behalf of the Spanish refugees, who had left their native country after the destruction of the Constitution in 1823. Their cause was pleaded with great earnestness and eloquence in

the *Athenæum*, and also, as I am told, in a very spirited pamphlet, which however I have not seen. Among the Spaniards he became acquainted with, was General Torrijos, whom he always regarded as a man of heroic nobleness and statesmanly wisdom. He used to speak of that General as a man altogether different from every other Southern European whom he had known; and as one who desired, in any future edifice of freedom, to build on the ancient institutions of Spain, and not to begin on a new ground-plan. For these reasons he longed, when the insurrection in 1830 broke out, that Torrijos should take the lead in it; and he crossed the Channel with him to St. Valery in a fishing boat. He would gladly have gone further, and have accompanied his friend in the ill-fated expedition which finally terminated in his execution at Malaga. But Sterling's health unfitted him for such a work; his presence in England was needed for the managing of the correspondence, and the collection of the funds for the expedition, so that Torrijos insisted on his returning, as a condition indispensable to the success of the enterprise. The calamitous issue of this undertaking, the death of Torrijos and of an English friend who accompanied him, weighed so heavily on Ster-

ling's mind, mixed up with a feeling of most unmerited self-reproach, as though he himself ought to have shared their dangers and their fate, that to the end of his life he could hardly bear to hear the subject spoken of.

Late in the autumn of 1830 he married Susannah, the eldest daughter of Lieutenant-General Barton, who at the time of her marriage had too much reason to fear that she might before long be left a widow; but whom, through the mysterious dispensations of life and death, he survived for more than a year.

A few months after his marriage, in consequence of threatening pulmonary symptoms, it was thought advisable that he should go to the West Indies, where his family had some property in the island of St. Vincent. Here he was residing at the time of the terrible hurricane which desolated that island in 1831. His house was blown down over his head; and he took refuge with his wife, whose confinement was approaching, in a cellar, where they had to remain some days, until the violence of the hurricane was spent. Almost everything he had in the house was destroyed by it; and he was scarcely able to preserve more than half a dozen rumpled books. In a letter from hence he

wrote: "The landscapes around me here are noble and lovely as any that can be conceived on earth. How indeed could it be otherwise in a small island of volcanic mountains, far within the tropics, and perpetually covered with the richest vegetation? The moral aspect of things is bad enough, but, if we had time, would be far from irremediable. On the whole the Anti-Slavery Society are much nearer the truth than their opponents. The negroes are by no means so poetical a race as you seem to suppose. The African traditions that you speak of, were probably collected several years ago. But, even if the slave-trade were still carried on, it would be difficult to collect here any traits of negro character and belief so wild and curious as those which have been communicated by our travellers in Africa. So far as I see, the slaves here are good-humoured, cunning, deceitful, and idle, without any great aptitude for ferocious crimes, and very little scruple at committing others. But I have seen them much only in very favorable circumstances. They are, as a body, decidedly unfit for freedom, and if left, as at present, completely in the hands of their masters, never will become so, unless through the agency of the Methodists." His own exertions for the instruction and im-

provement of the negroes under his charge were such as threatened to counteract the purpose for which he had gone to the West Indies; and his wife became seriously alarmed for his life. She was very thankful therefore when they returned to Europe in August 1832. One of his chief motives for returning was that he might find out a good schoolmaster for the negroes, and send him over to St. Vincent's.

In 1833 he published the novel of *Arthur Coningsby*, the main part of which had been written some years before. He could not well write anything which did not bear marks of a vigorous mind; but in this work the elements, except in an episode here and there, are too manifestly in a state of fermentation. There is a strong sense of the evils of society; but the evils are not subdued, or brought under any sort of harmony: they predominate and gain the victory.

During his stay in the West Indies, he began to form the resolution of devoting himself to the ministry of the Church. His speculations on questions connected with religion, which had previously been rather of a philosophical cast, became more directly theological; and his own personal convictions grew livelier and more definite. In

February 1832, he wrote to a friend: "So far as it is possible for two men to compare notes, which however is so difficult, as to render the ordinary religious confidences little more than parrotry or gibberish, I should say that I agree with you in all essentials. I feel with you, that the great difficulty, and the one the solution of which would end all others, lies in the Will; and there is no resource but obedience, patience, and prayer. As to your view of our nearness to the end of this dispensation, I have often been inclined to entertain it; but I know that this belief is a ready means of self-delusion, and leads to drawing innumerable worldly passions into the service of religion, where of course they are but disguised enemies. Every man's life is to him the latter times; and every man's death-hour, to him the dawning of the Day of Judgement. Moreover I cannot see my way to any such certainty as Irving derives from the Prophecies; and I have scarcely the trace of doubt that the unknown tongues are the familiar and easily intelligible language of mere human vanity and superstition. Of the changes in the relations of society, I think nearly with you. They may all be traced to the increased facility of communication and combination, without a corresponding increase of know-

ledge and morality. But I do not see that the line is yet outwardly so plain and broad between the white and the impure, the faithful and the rebel spirits, as to warrant us in looking for any speedy and final manifestation of the Person of Christ. With St. Simonism and some of its disciples I am tolerably familiar. They tried to convert me at Paris a few years ago. I was taken suddenly to one of their meetings, where I was the only Gentile; and the first thing I heard was, that religion is one of the fine arts. In discussing the doctrines of the sect with some of its leaders, I rested my argument entirely on the truth of Christianity. There is one obstacle to their success, which will meet them throughout Europe, and more especially in England, viz., that potent spirit of individuality, which may be regarded as the shadow of the Gospel, extending to vast regions and millions of minds altogether ignorant of the substance. Ages ago the Chinese were St. Simonists in theory; and that is as much as any man or people ever can be. Of the details of English politics happily I do not hear much. On the whole I think the chief European Governments rather less wicked and foolish than usual. Colonization and education might, I suspect, even now save England from revolution.

But it will soon be too late; and I fear the Church is already doomed. You do not tell me whether you still incline to take orders. I often think of doing so; and if nothing unforeseen should happen to change my views, and I can leave this in two or three years, I may still be ordained before I am thirty."

Again, during his voyage homeward in August of the same year, he wrote thus to a friend, who, he had heard, was on the point of marriage: "The prospects for your future life, which this event presents to me, are a great and substantial consolation. I have a somewhat longer experience than you of the benefits of marriage to a man whose heart and principles are scarcely, or very recently, fixed in the line of practical Christianity. I write on this matter with more confidence and gratitude than I could have expressed a very few months ago. For I seem to myself of late to have entered decidedly, and for the first time, into possession of those blessings which are offered to all in Christ's Redemption; and among the many means which under God's good providence have helped me so far forward, I regard my marriage and the birth of my child as nearly, if not quite, the chiefest. I also feel that I owe the deepest gratitude to Coleridge, and,

though not quite to the same extent, to Edward Irving. I have read *the Aids to Reflection* again and again, and with ever new advantage; and in the Sermons, Lectures, and Discourses of Irving, although his unceasing vehemence makes me dizzy, his polemical violence repels me, and I see much rashness and presumption, and, as I think, some positive error, I yet feel throughout the love, faith, and hope, the life, though not always the light, of a richly gifted and regenerate man. Aided by these, disciplined by many grave events, and not, I trust, unguided by the Holy Spirit, I have begun of late to read the Bible with diligence and unfailing interest, and have in some degree learnt by experience the power and advantage of prayer, and enjoy, what I never knew before, and what even now is checkered with many fears, a lively and increasing hope that I may be able to overcome the world. You must, I think, know the hesitation and reluctance with which one writes in this way, even to one's nearest and dearest friends. But it is the subject that now perpetually fills my mind; and I think you will not wish that I should have gone out of the way to seek for other more amusing and unpersonal topics."

Some months after his return to Europe, he

went to Germany, purposing to spend some time there in acquiring its language and studying its literature. Here I met him at Bonn in June, 1833, when I was returning from Italy to commence my residence at Herstmonceux. In the course of conversation, I was delighted to find that the advice which I had given him some years before, to enter into the Christian ministry, had taken root in his mind, and was beginning to assume a definite form. He talked of spending a year or two abroad, with the view of gaining some insight into German philosophy and theology, and said he then hoped to take orders, if he could find any one to give him a title. I strongly urged him to execute this latter resolution, adding that, if, when he did so, my own curacy were vacant, I should deem it a blessed privilege to enlist such a man in the service of the Church. A few months afterwards he wrote to me that my visit had led him to alter his plans, and that, if my curacy was not filled up, and I still retained the intention of offering it to him, he would seek ordination immediately. Accordingly he was ordained Deacon at Chichester on Trinity Sunday, 1834. To Priest's orders he was never admitted, as the state of his health, ere many months were gone by, put a compulsory close to his ministerial life.

During the few months that he was allowed to fulfill the duties of the ministry, he shewed the same energy and zeal which he carried into everything he undertook. He was continually devising some fresh scheme for improving the condition of the Parish. His aim was to awaken the minds of the people, to arouse their conscience, to call forth their sense of moral responsibility, to make them feel their own sinfulness, their need of redemption, and then to lead them to a recognition of the Divine Love by which that redemption is offered to us. In visiting them he was diligent in all weathers to the risk of his own health, which was greatly impaired thereby; and his gentleness and considerate care for the comforts of the sick won their affection, so that, though his stay was very short, his name is still, after a dozen years, cherished by many. Here too his peculiar faculty of discerning and drawing forth latent powers was evinced in several instances, among others in that of a poor cobbler, with whom, in one of his pastoral visits, he was much struck, so as to invite him to become a teacher in our Sunday School, and who has since mounted by degrees to be the clerk of a parochial union, and superintendent registrar of the district, thankfully acknowledging that his whole rise is owing

to Sterling's kind exhortation and encouragement. But the best record of his views with regard to his ministerial duties is the following paper, written while he was engaged in them, at a time when we were thinking about building an additional school, which was erected some time after, for the boys of the Parish. He was in the daily habit of noting down his thoughts and feelings on matters which interested him. Large piles of these papers he ordered to be burnt during his last illness; and perhaps this is the only one which, through a happy accident, has been preserved.

"The only way for a clergyman, the best way for all, to regard the parish they live in, is as a Church, in the primitive Christian sense of the word; that is, a community of people called by God's grace from the world, that is, from following their own desires, their own theories, their own interests, to the acknowledgement of the true spiritual end of man's existence, made known to us and attainable by us through Jesus Christ,—this end being a moral union with God. This view ought to determine all our outward duties; and if it were allowed to do so, which could only be by our having inwardly the mind of Christ, it would perpetually serve in return

to awaken us to more lively personal communion with Him, and imitation of Him. The only adequate examples I know of how the Spirit of God, if not resisted and grieved by us, would lead us to regard our relations towards our fellow members in our particular Church, are those of the great apostles, Paul, Peter, and John. I consider it no small calamity, that men are commonly so persuaded of the total difference in kind between the work of God's Spirit in the hearts of these men, and in those of all other Christians, that laymen have altogether, and clergymen almost, ceased to regard them as models for us, except in their abstinence from acts of sin. A little knowledge and reflection will prove the erroneousness of this view; and every mind which feels any earnest sympathy with them, has a witness in itself that it is called to a like kind, however inferior an extent of action. Now let us bear this in mind, and consider how one of them, say St. Paul, would be likely to act, if placed in another age than his own, and confined to one small division of country, in short, if he were in the situation of a modern parish priest. Is it not plain that he would substitute, for his former wide excursions,

the greatest possible intensity of influence in detail? It would be no longer from Jerusalem to Damascus, to Arabia, to Derbe, Lystra, Ephesus, Philippi, Athens, Corinth, Rome, that he would travel: but each house would be to him what each of these great cities was,—a place where he would bend his whole being, and spend his heart, for the conversion, purification, elevation of those under his influence. The whole man would be for ever at work for this purpose,—head, heart, knowledge, time, body, possessions,—all would be directed to this end; and, except so far as other duties, viz., those to a family interfered, to this end alone. And if Paul would have done this,—each of us ought to try to do so. Of course none of us is a Paul; but we may be perfectly like him in will, however meaner and weaker in faculties. The iris in the dewdrop is just as true and perfect an iris, as the bow that measures the heavens, and betokens the safety of a world from deluge. I conceive that a Paul would have been for ever moving from house to house to do his Master's work; but there are doubtless two particular departments, which peculiarly require an apostolic faithfulness,—I mean worship, and educa-

tion, in each of which there ought to be much of the other. But with the adults in the weekly service devotion should be the chief, and teaching the inferior element; while with the young in schools the opposite proportion must be established. In each case the two should be inseparable; and the Church and the School itself should be considered to be so intimately related, that each implies the design of establishing the other; a design so gravely and deeply held, that its execution should be retarded by nothing, but the absolute and hard necessities of outward life. Too long in England (and here alone, I believe, of Protestant countries) the Church dragged on its maimed and sickly existence without the School; and we are now suffering for the sinful omission, in the attempt to set up the School as a substitute for and rival of the Church. What then would Paul have said, had he been placed in a parish where the school was wanting? Would he have talked about it, dined, slept, talked about it again,—or about something else,—and done nothing? and that too while the Church was there, as a memorial of the 'completing counterpart' so deeply needed? while he had the pulpit of the Church as a fulcrum

for his lever, with which to move, if it could not be done otherwise, the very tombstones of his hearers' fathers, as materials for that no less necessary, or less holy temple,—the temple of the young? Nor do I suppose the case would have seemed to him much better, if half or a third of the children, the lambs of his flock, were receiving a nominal education. But the matter will not bear talking of: it is too plain. Would he have had silver in his house, or luxury of any kind, the worth of which might enable him to supply the want? These things so used, or locked up from use, seem rather the 'hay, straw, stubble,' than the gold and precious stones that he talks of, as materials of the spiritual structure. What then should we do? I cannot doubt; and yet I dare not answer. For while I write, and try to convince myself, I feel and know how many more opposing weaknesses and self-delusions I have within, than my words would seem to acknowledge, or the notion of my sincerity would admit. I often think myself ready for any sacrifice, yet give way the next minute to some paltry temptation of temper, or indolence, or pleasure, or vainglory. And even in meditating on the mind of the Apostles, I dare not

calculate how much of my own wish for their zeal, and for doing their works, is a mere selfish lust of activity, or a desire for the praise of men. So that this, like so many other speculations and projects, must end, I fear, only in a prayer to God, to pardon the sins I have committed, while the thoughts have been passing through my mind,—and to give me the honest heart and single eye, without which all attempts to serve him are miserable hypocrisy."

Of that which it was to me personally to have such a fellow-labourer, to live constantly in the freest communion with such a friend, I cannot speak. He came to me at a time of heavy affliction, just after I had heard that the brother, who had been the sharer of all my thoughts and feelings from my childhood, had bid farewell to his earthly life at Rome; and thus he seemed given to me to make up in some sort for him whom I had lost. Almost daily did I look out at his usual hour for coming to me, and watch his tall slender form walking rapidly across the hill in front of my window, with the assurance that he was coming to cheer and brighten, to rouse and stir me, to call me up to some height of feeling, or down into some depth of thought.

His lively spirit responding instantaneously to every impulse of Nature or of Art, his generous ardour in behalf of whatever is noble and true, his scorn of all meanness, of all false pretences and conventional beliefs, softened as it was by compassion for the victims of those besetting sins of a cultivated age, his never flagging impetuosity in pushing onward to some unattained point of duty or of knowledge, along with his gentle, almost reverential, affectionateness towards his former tutor, rendered my intercourse with him an unspeakable blessing; and time after time has it seemed to me that his visit had been like a shower of rain, bringing down freshness and brightness on a dusty roadside hedge. By him too the recollection of these our daily meetings was cherished till the last. In a letter to his eldest boy, who was at school, and to whom he used to write daily, about two months before his death, after speaking of various flowers in his garden, especially of some gumcistuses, he says: "I think I like them chiefly because I remember a large bush of the kind, close to the greenhouse through which one passed into Mr. Hare's library. The ground used to be all white with the fallen flowers. I have so often stood near it, talking to him, and looking away over the Pevensey Level

to the huge old Roman Castle, and the sea, and Beachy Head beyond. The thought of the happy hours I have so spent in talking with him is and always will be very pleasant. It is long since I saw him. I have been too ill, and have too much besides upon me, to keep up latterly almost any correspondence. But I know that if we met to-morrow, or to-morrow come a hundred years, it would be as of old, like brothers. Happy, is it not, my boy, that there are in human life such ties of affection and mutual faith, as no lapse of time can weaken!"

To himself too the brief period of his ministerial life was fraught with blessing, as it ever must be to one who endeavours to fulfil its duties in such a spirit. It gave him a definite purpose and aim,—the highest of all purposes and aims,—a definite field of action, which to a man of his energy was almost a necessity, and without which the habits of bold, searching speculation are encompassed with numerous dangers. It supplied him with a centre for his life, and gathered all his faculties around it, which were heightened even severally by their mutual action upon each other, and by the grandeur and inspiring character of their object. To the last, though much changed in many of his interests and of his views,

he looked back with thankfulness to his work at Herstmonceux. Thus in 1841, writing about his past life, he said that his "inmost nature, suppressed and perverted for years by ignorance, by serious errors, and heavy sorrows, was set right at last and made healthy by the moral effort and self-sacrifice of taking orders."

Unhappily for the parish, and for me, and for himself also, the state of his health did not allow him to carry on his pastoral labours for more than six months. Having entered upon them in June, 1834, he wrote to me in the following September: "The perpetual return of slight obscure uneasiness in the chest, which I feel to be connected with my former serious illnesses, and a liability, which I have suffered from all my life, to severe derangements of the digestion, with all their train of pains, languors, and depressions, do not, I trust, make it improbable that I may go on with my present very inadequate scale of labour for some months, or impossible that I may regain perfect health; but I think the chances are against me. I have not the slightest intention, and certainly no wish, to abandon my post, and only mention my belief, that you may be able to turn in your mind the question as to what course you ought to pursue for the good of

the parish, in case of my being disabled. The interests of our flock must of course be the great consideration with you,—and with me too, as long as I hold my present situation. I believe I need hardly say that I have no plans or expectations, no feelings, which could make me desirous of being separated from you. Little as I have been able to do in my vocation, compared with my ideal of a parish priest, or even with the achievements of very many other men, it is more than I expected, and much more than I have ever earned a right to hope for. If you should be content to go on as at present, I shall be rejoiced to do my best as long as I am able to do anything." This he continued to do with unabated zeal till the following February, when he was forced to go to London for advice. Thence he wrote: "The blow has come at last, for which I have been trying to prepare both you and myself. I have been for near an hour to-day with Dr. Nicholl, who gave as much attention and anxiety to my case as if I had been heir to the Crown; and the conclusion is, that, though not now, he thinks, seriously ill, perfect quiet is necessary to prevent dangerous pulmonary illness creeping on till it may become irremediable. I ought not, in his opinion, to attempt the per-

formance of any public duty for some time to come. You will know with what pain I write this, and how much the sorrow I feel at the prospect before me must be aggravated by the necessity for snapping so suddenly the cords by which I have been endeavouring to help you in working our machinery. Deep as is my own regret for myself, I hardly think of it so much as of the situation in which you will now for a time at least be placed. I can only trust that the Providence, which so greatly for my good first placed me in your Parish, will now enable you to find some one equal to be your assistant in those happy, and, I trust, useful labours from which I am withdrawn. I hope to see you on Monday, and make what arrangements we can for the good of the people. It is some consolation to fancy myself still entitled to take part with you in planning for their benefit. However my present state of health may end, living or dying, I shall always look to the months of my ministry at Herstmonceux, and of my closer connection with you, as a most bright and healthy contrast to my previous life. When I think of leaving you, I feel as if the one sabbath of my life were at an end. I may fix in London or elsewhere, and may spend more or fewer hours and words in

the service of the Church; but I shall be in the midst of excitements and contentions of which I have long since swallowed many a drenching dose, and which I look forward to for the future with horror."

Still, though forced to give up all active duty, he continued to reside at Herstmonceux till the autumn of 1835, and then went to London and took a house at Bayswater. During the whole of this year his mind was in the fullest vigour; and he was busy in studying philosophy and theology, especially the best German writers, and in planning works of his own on cognate subjects, some of which were executed to a considerable extent. The chief forms which his plans assumed were a series of Discourses on Revelation, and a Treatise on Ethics. In March 1836 he wrote to me: "The Discourses that I have taken so much pains with, begin to look more shapely. I hope before long to send you the contents of a volume to look at. I premise, before any Biblical enquiry, three Essays on God, on Revelation, and on Sin. I then give a rapid survey of the Scriptures, follow this by dissertations on Inspiration, Miracles, and Prophecy, and then add six or seven consecutive discourses on the main topics of the Old Testament, in chronological order, beginning

with the Fall. Of this more than half is actually written out, and a still larger proportion of the second half on the New Testament.—I have just finished an Essay or Discourse on the Narrative of the Fall, which pretty well satisfies my own mind as to the main outlines; but I do not yet see my way as to the history of Cain and Abel. The narrative is evidently meant to be significant, and not a mere legend (see, for instance, the names); and yet significant of what? What is the meaning of Cain's punishment and the mark set upon him?—I will own to you that, the more I go into the Old Testament, the more ground I find for hesitating about the great physical miracles, from the apparent mixture of alloy in the narratives, their slight outward authority, and the difficulties of any scheme that would furnish a previous ground for the facts, and yet account for the imperfection of our record of them. But I am far from giving the thing up; for it is impossible to overlook the continuity of the faith in a revealed Monotheism among the Jews from Abraham to Christ, or to doubt that scientific enquiry and inward experience bring out more and more the reality and exclusiveness of His claims as the Son of God, and the Redeemer of mankind. I would give

much for a commentary by Tholuck or Olshausen on the Old Testament, similar to that of the latter on the New. I have just read Schiller's Lecture on *the Sending of Moses*, which, if there were nothing else against it, would, I think, be sufficiently overthrown by the patriarchal history, in which the evidence for reality, and resting on contemporary documents, or wonderfully accurate tradition, seems, from the progressive continuity in the most minute points, to be perfectly irresistible.—I must have much misrepresented myself, if I said anything at all resembling the notion that the Jewish colouring of the Gospel arises only from the *accidental* circumstance of our Lord's birth in Judea. My difficulty is to imagine how any one can think so, considering that, in any other part of the world, He must have begun like Paul at Athens, by preaching an 'unknown God,' and that probably the only and indispensable point of transition for the early Churches beyond Judea from Paganism to Christianity was the faith of the Proselytes of the Gate, and the yearnings of those, with whom, though unconverted, the Jews had intercouse, for further knowledge of the One and Righteous God of Israel. But for the spiritual faith and ethics of the Jews, it seems to me that there

would have been nothing in the Old World with which the New could connect itself; and the Gospel would have dropt from the clouds like a meteoric stone, instead of rising into view as the purest portion of a vein co-eval with the creation, and of which everything else is but, as it were, the ore or the dross. But the obscurity to my mind lies in this, that, in the very proportion in which the Hebrew records afford clear and lively evidence of this evangelic element in the old world, in the same degree they are free from the mixture of the prodigiously miraculous; and therefore one cannot but ask whether the physically marvellous be not a separable alloy. I am far from denying the possibility, that in the earliest times, and especially at the great epoch of the constitution of a Monotheistic nation, all things may have been in a more outward state, and connected themselves necessarily with more visible manifestations of the spiritual system around us and within us; and that the evolution of the Inward through the Visible into amazing phenomena may have been the necessary characteristic of such a period, and the only mode of bringing home to men's apprehensions the idea and reality of a Will and Reason ruling our nature, and the kindred archetype of the pecu-

liarly human in man.—You have now, very roughly and slenderly stated, what is *my* difficulty in the matter; and any hint you can give me towards the solution will be more acceptable than rubies. But I must add, that any painfulness of interest in the question arises entirely from the state of opinion on the matter in this country; as no possible view of it would to my mind one whit weaken the security of the Gospel, any more than the overthrow of the old notion of the uncompounded and elemental nature of atmospheric air could tend to impede the breathing of the undeceived philosopher." A like train of thought is carried on somewhat fancifully in the following remarks: "I have just read Schleiermacher's beautiful and affecting discourse at his son's grave. I know nothing more perfect or precious. In a minor way it is striking to see how so unfanciful (I do not say, unimaginative) a man is hurried into imagery by feeling. It is in a great degree the want of faith, hope, and love, that makes people write on religion in a style suitable for bills of lading and kings' speeches; and it was partly the fulness of these in the Prophets that gave them their visionary and symbolic style. You see, Schleiermacher opens with images; and the style then runs

smoother and more equably; and such, I think, is the natural course of passion. I cannot but connect this with the bursts of fact-imagery and phenomenal wonders at the first crash of each of the great epochs of Revelation. If this makes you laugh, I do not know that it will have done any harm."

Of the ethical work which was occupying his thoughts at the same time, he speaks in several letters. In one, he says: "I have read through Whewell's edition of Mackintosh's *Dissertation on Ethics*. I like it much better than I expected; and it has cleared up some of my own views in a way that has led me to write a good many pages, with more hope of success in making an intelligible and innoxious book. I think I see my way clearly as to the fundamental principle, which I place in a peculiar feeling, connected with and guiding volition; though I am far from holding a moral instinct, prescribing to what volitions this feeling shall attach itself. The rule of this I find in the nature of man as a whole, to the preservation and development of which, it seems plain enough, our power of voluntary action must be directed; and hence the laws of its operation. My difficulty, in which however I see some light, is as to a point mentioned in Schleiermacher's

Introduction to his *Kritik der Sittenlehre*, at the end of the second section, the *Eintheilung des menschlichen Geistes in was immer für einzelne einander bei oder untergeordnete Kräfte und Vermögen.* For of course a Power directed to the preservation and unfolding of our being must take into account the relation and subordination of its parts. I hope to escape all the abysmal questions as to the genesis and constitution of the Will, and as to Freedom or Necessity; taking as facts that we are conscious of volition, and of a moral feeling or conscience." In the next letter he replies to some remarks I made on the foregoing statement: "A year ago, or nearly so, when I first took up the question of Morals, I saw clearly enough what you state as to the certainty that they must depend on something deep, permanent, and universal, and not merely on our feelings of pleasure and pain, or on any blind instinct, which is properly the name for whatever is lowest, not for what is highest in man. But I could make little progress, and felt that there was something beyond my grasp. I now feel convinced that I have caught the clue. There is no doubt that the law of the Will must be found in the Reason, that is, in our power of immediate intuition as to the ends of our being and the

foundations of our constitution. But there is another element in the question, over which it seems to me that the Scotch and the Benthamites have alike broken their shins. For, if we admit what I have just stated, there is no answer to the enquiry, why we regard guilt in ourselves with a different feeling from that with which we behold all other confusion and ruin; the feeling which, I affirm, is not a feeling deciding what is right and wrong, but one which, the fact of the right and wrong being given, attaches to these a sense or emotion of approval and blame. I propose to insist on and explain this in the first place, till I have made it perfectly clear that I am not speaking of the Moral Law, but of the Moral Sanction. This point having been settled, there arises the much more difficult one, the answer to which I have by no means exhausted in its details, but as to which I see enough to be tolerably sure that the thing may be done. My view amounts nearly to the old Stoical one of perfection. It seems involved in the very notion of the Will, as the guiding power of a being, that its operations should be directed to the preservation and good of the being. If it be said that what this is depends on the fancy or taste of every one in particular, and that we are without a law, I

propose to show that this is not true; that the more man is man, the more his whole nature is unfolded in all its parts, the more clear it becomes that there is a system and meaning, a balance and proportion of his powers, which cannot be violated without disturbance and a sense of guilt; but, analysed to its last elements, I think it may be shewn that our nature is a complex of two powers, or a double operation of one; and that these poles of humanity are Feeling and Knowledge. To develope each of these to its utmost limits, till at last it shall fill the whole sphere of existence, and to keep the equipoise of the two, seems to me to be the proper function of the Will; and that it may be proved that our instincts, affections, and circumstances work toward this purpose, till they issue in a self-consciousness which is its own evidence of the truth. I say that the object of feeling and of intelligence is simply existence: but observe, that existence is interesting to us in proportion as it rises from nothingness to the full capacity of feeling and of intelligence, with the Will as their arbiter. Hence man is more important to us than an animal, an animal than a stone, and God than all. This is my hierarchy of being, according to the scale of which, Con-

science decides that our affections and understanding must act. The second active principle is, that existence is important to us in proportion as it is brought within our reach. A flower in my garden is therefore perhaps of more value to me than a sage in India, or an angel in the sun. Thirdly I would affirm that we are bound to value the objects of our feelings and intelligence in proportion to their accordance with their proper aims and with ours. Hence an Iago or a devil may be the object of moral abhorrence. Besides these views, which seem to me nearly sufficient for determining the moral law as to ourselves, and as to our intercourse with other moral beings, there is a train of consequences arising from the fact that we and they are not mere points in space, but have bodies connecting us with a whole system of outward things. The needs of these bodies, their capacities of suffering and enjoyment, and the powers they exercise around us, establish claims for them which it is a point of duty to take into account; the connection with our other faculties being such, that these last are crippled or unnerved by the result of either ascetic denial or epicurean indulgence. Lastly, on these principles it may, I think, be shewn that the most perfect moral state is that

in which our feelings and intelligence are most directed to the only perfect moral Being, and habitually regard all things with reference to Him. Very possibly I may not have made myself intelligible; but I feel persuaded I have got my foot on firm ground; and, with leisure and health, I hope to complete a tenable system. I have been reading some of Schleiermacher, and hope with time and labour to master his scheme; but it involves much work on the authors he talks of."

The great Christian idea, by which at that time he was chiefly impressed, was that of Sin, and the consequent necessity of Redemption. To this in his letters at that period he is continually recurring; for instance, after saying that he had been reading the Life of St. Theresa: "There is the deepest piety, the most watchful self-distrust, and the most ardent zeal for Christian perfection, with many beautiful thoughts, and some very curious anecdotes. But the notion of our good works meriting certain returns from God runs through the whole that I have read. Everything that I read about the Romanists disinclines me more and more to any scheme of reunion with them, which should not require an explicit renunciation, by a General Council sanc-

tioned by the Pope, of penance, indulgences, and auricular confession. I am persuaded, these never can be practically in operation, without overthrowing the foundations of the Christian system, by introducing that wicked fiction of our having claims against God." In another letter he writes: "I have been looking into the Koran with reference to my Discourses. I find more good, and less ill, than I anticipated, in Mahomet, and am far from clear that it is right to call him an impostor. The two great blots of his system seem to be, first, the want of a history: it is all words, and no facts. Secondly there is an entire absence of the idea of sacrifice, and of the whole circle of truths that revolve about it, and are the deepest and most essential in the Gospel. He was a warlike and Arabian Socrates, and probably really believed himself commissioned from heaven." Again, speaking of Milman's *History of the Jews*, he writes: "There is certainly in some parts a leaning to regard the Mosaic system, and generally the providential government of the Jews, as directed more to merely secular and economical objects than I can think; and he perhaps tends to represent Revelation as little more than the manifestation and divine sanction of a rational and benign

scheme of morality; hence seeming in a manner to overlook the deeper and more peculiar elements of sin, and a sense of guilt in the nature of man, with all the Pauline consequences, and the necessity and reality of a communication of spiritual life, which are so chief a part of the teaching of John. This of course darkens his view of much of the earlier dispensation; and on sacrifices, for instance, he seems to have nothing of the least interest to offer; though I think he does keep clear of the narrow and ghastly speculations of Magee, and of most of our modern orthodox Brahmins." A similar conviction manifests itself in the following remarks, though founded on an erroneous representation of Kant's *Ethics*. "E. seems to me not to have yet gone beyond a notional life. It is manifest that he has no knowledge of the necessity of a progress from *Wissen* to *Wesen;* and one therefore is not much surprised that he should think Kant a sufficient hierarch. I know very little of Kant's doctrine; but I made out from E. what seems to me a fundamental unsoundness in his moral scheme, viz., the assertion of the certainty of a heavenly futurity for man, because the idea of duty involves that of merit, and hence of reward. Now duty seems

in reality rather to exclude merit; and at all events the notion of external reward is a mere empirical appendage, and has none but an arbitrary connexion with ethics. I regard it as a very happy thing for E. that he has come to England. In Italy he probably would never have gained any intuition into the reality of Being, as different from a mere power of speculating and perceiving; and of course without this he can never reach to more than the merest Gnosis, which, taken alone, is a poor inheritance, a box full of title-deeds to an estate, which is covered with lava, or sunk under the sea." From finding this deep conviction of sin, which he missed in so many other books, he was so much delighted with Tholuck's *True Initiation of the Doubter*, that he translated it, as he said, "without the smallest thought of publishing my version, which has been written partly to secure my own knowledge of the book, but chiefly for the use of some half dozen friends,—Mr. D. for instance, the defect of whose theology, compounded as it is of the doctrine of the Greek Fathers, of the Mystics, and of ethical philosophers, consists, if I may hint a fault in one whose holiness, meekness, and fervour would have made him the beloved disciple of him whom Jesus loved, in

an insufficient apprehension of the reality and depth of sin." Indeed this one thought was at this time the key-note of all his speculations. Thus he wrote: "I find in all my conversations with B. that his fundamental position is, the good of evil: he is for ever quoting Goethe's epigram about the idleness of wishing to jump off one's shade. This is of course very closely connected with Pantheism, and also with the dusky glare of discontent, which pervades B.'s whole mind; for, by a fine necessity of our being, the evil that we deny, thereby becomes only the more present to us; and its final extinction becomes impossible, till it has revealed itself in all its depth and reality." Again: "I have been looking into Jonathan Edwards. It is curious that, when I wrote to you about my ethical views, I did not to the best of my recollection know of Edwards's. I certainly did not when I struck first into my present path. There is some confusion and much imperfection in his speculations on the subject; but he seems to me to have been near the truth, when he asserted the law of Duty to be the love of Being. He seems best described as a Protestant Schoolman, a man exercising wondrous analytical powers on arbitrary and sometimes fallacious premises. I

have not yet found my way as to the theory of the Will, but have little doubt that the truth lies below Edwards's digging. I find myself more and more attracted towards the divines who occupy themselves much in setting forth the depth and extent of sin, as a fact of human nature; though, as you may suppose, far from satisfied with the Calvinistic theories as to the divine purposes and the process of Redemption. I do not find Tholuck as full or satisfactory as I could wish on this last matter; the doctrine of substitution appearing in him with too much nakedness. But I am in hopes it may be shewn that this, when connected with the cycle of ideas relating to Christ's Headship, and to the unity of our nature as common to Him and us, issues in the one radical and comprehensive truth, which man requires, and which Revelation on so many sides sets forth; and so to justify and interpret the stupendous emotions, the prodigious revolutions of character, the altered aspect of the world, and all the oracular breathings of the Spirit, which are found in connection with the doctrines of Guilt and Atonement."

During the same period he also indulged now and then, as at intervals he was ever fond of doing, in poetical composition. But his poems

were mostly rather the imaginative expression of predetermined moral and philosophical truths, than the spontaneous utterance of a poetical mind, in whose creations the concrete, living, personal interest precedes and predominates over that of any abstract, reflective propositions. Thus, having been kept at home by a cold, he says, in November, 1835: "Between last night and Friday last I wrote a poem of six hundred lines, something similar in character to *the Statues* (a portion of which had been printed in *the Athenæum* for June, 1829), and which I think of as the first book of a longish work, in which *the Statues* would form the third. The second would be a tale of guilty love; and the fourth would include the greater part of a poem on the Bible, which you would find in my manuscripts. I have got now into the way of writing with so much facility, that I may perhaps reckon on accomplishing this design before very long. The first book, which is complete by itself, represents a youth, the pupil of a poetic magician, who, when the boy is about to go into the world, calls up, by his enchanted harpings, a series of beautiful phantom women, and tells him that shapes of kindred splendour will encounter him in all nature and life, but that, to give beauty of any kind an abiding reality, it must be sought

and appropriated only under the consciousness and controll of duty and exclusive love. In the second book, if I ever write it, I shall endeavour to exemplify this by the misery and degradation arising from the hero's fall into this evil state; and there would thus be room for more of common human interest than in the first. The third opens with a reference to the speaker's distress; and this would appear as the result of the previous circumstances, while I should so alter it as to make the Archimage the same as the minstrel of the first book. The fourth would pass on from the summit of human existence, as reflective and creative, which is exhibited at the close of *the Statues*, to the Christian idea of man, as eminently and peculiarly receptive and submissive; and it is here that I should introduce the poem on the Bible. In the most general sense it would in some degree be my object to exhibit the gorgeousness and vividness of Shelley's imagery, with the meditative beauty and wide speculation of Wordsworth, but both on the high and enduring ground of the Gospel. I assure you I do not think I am so wedded to this project, that I should be pained by my friends' disapproval of it. I shall be grateful to you if you will tell me exactly what you think."

His confidence in his poetical powers was ever easily shaken; and though his plans might be formed with eager enthusiasm, and might seem to hold out splendid visions, he was not withheld either by vanity or by obstinacy from abandoning them, on the expression of objections from a friend whose judgement he respected. Thus, a couple of months after the letter last quoted, he wrote: "For several weeks I have left my metrical labours, but after nearly completing the poem of which I described the plan to you. Your suggestion as to the necessity for a strong and real human interest was perfectly sound; but I thought that the character of the work in that respect was determined by what was already written; and the consequence is, that the poem is, I think, deficient in interest, and too abstract in its ground and colouring for general readers. I abandoned the idea of a Christian conclusion, from the apprehension that our sense of personal concern in this would be too strong for the mere phantasmagoria of the rest, and would produce an unpleasant jar. The composition therefore is useless, except in fragments; some of which, especially some lyrical portions, may perhaps give pleasure to my friends."

A spirit of his order could not but be continually busying itself in meditating and speculating

on the prospects of the world and of Christianity. In February, 1836, he wrote to me: "My mind has been a good deal turned to the probable fortunes of the world and the Church; and I incline rather more to the hope of a great speedy revival and re-organization, founded on the obvious multiplication and strengthening of all the elements of human life and activity, which seem seething in unexampled disturbance, and breaking forth on all hands; and which can, I suppose, only be harmonized by being connected with some root of permanence and some centre of peace. If any existing society or Church is to be the nucleus of a new system, it can only be by the sloughing off of much that is old. But I hope this will be done rather by the impulse of new life from within, than by any wrench from without. The quantity of inwardness, faith, and power, which has come before me in my own generation, cannot, I think, pass away into the Invisible without helping towards some great outward revolution. But O! how perilous will be the position of any man who may stand forth as the leader and standard-bearer in such a movement! For how small and weakly charged were the 'lofts of storied thunder,' even in Luther's time, which the Prince of this world could set loose against him, compared with those

of modern Civilization and Philosophy, which would be just as fierce in their way, and as guileful, as were of old the Papacy and the Empire." In May of the same year he wrote thus: "I suppose you will have heard of the Bishop of London's appeal to the public, to subscribe for the building and endowing of fifty new Churches in the Capital. I hope there is more chance of success than if he had spoken of five. I am out of the way of hearing what more is doing about it; but I wish men could be persuaded to take it up in the spirit of the Crusaders, one man give his plate, another his horses, a third his superfluous books, and so forth; and that every man who cares for Christianity, or even for the diffusion of the faith that men are not beasts, would remember how little any outward sacrifice is, compared with the object of raising mankind, and one's self with them, out of the whirl of dreams and sensations into the region of the Universal and Personal. Of course no heaps of bricks, with incomes attached to them by way of souls, can do this without a deepening and refining of life and affection in those who are to minister at the new altars. But I am sure that this latter and higher hope will be helped to fulfilment, instead of being retarded, by the outward means. Some of the

so-called Evangelicals have established a society, in which I take much interest, called the Church Pastoral Aid Society, for the purpose of supplying lay assistants, Deacons in the old sense, to those Parochial Clergymen who may wish for and want them. These are to visit the poor and sick, read to them, converse with them, exhort them to attend the Church-services, and, as I hope, lay the foundations of additional congregations where such are wanting. The improvement of the Clergy can come, I suppose, only from the Universities, where we can only pray that some one may arise to widen and strengthen the general and the theological education." His earnest feelings on the last-mentioned point he was continually expressing, as for instance, in another letter: "My two great practical objects, had I any power, would be to mend the education of the Clergy at the Universities, and to bring a very much larger body of teachers to bear on our population, especially in towns. I am half out of patience with societies for converting Jews, Turks, and New Zealanders, while half the people in our great cities have never heard of a God, except to blaspheme by. It is possible however that the expansive and contractile powers of the Church may strengthen each other; and if

so, there is no more to be said, but to get immediately a new Society, with the Bishops at its head, and 100,000*l.* a year, to evangelize our town masses." Again: "The Bishop of London's exertions for church-building, &c., are admirable: and once let a plan be broached at either University for a better education of the clergy, and it must needs go on. As enquiry proceeds, doubts will deepen and multiply; and the necessity will become more and more apparent for a stronger and more spiritual faith to build on, whether the superstructure is meant to be a Polity or a Science."

I have dwelt thus long on this period of my friend's life, not only because it was the time when our correspondence was the most frequent and copious, and when the subjects of it were the most interesting, but also because it was the period of his greatest moral and intellectual energy, when all his faculties were working together for the accomplishment of a grand purpose, and when he seemed about to fulfil the end for which he was so richly endowed. But, alas! this period was soon cut short; the works he was engaged in were interrupted; and though he lived several years after, he was never able to resume them, or to apply continuously to anything that called for

laborious thought or study. About the middle of March, 1836, the pulmonary symptoms became alarming. On the 24th he wrote to me: "The decision of the medical men is, that I have no actual pulmonary disease, but that there is decided danger of it. My own impression, from the most careful observation, is, that there probably is a beginning of consumption, and that it is only a question as to a few months sooner or later. I have to be thankful for a perfect freedom from grief or anxiety, except some uneasiness as to the secular interests of my poor children; but this too I hope to be enabled to regard as, no less than everything else, a subject for faith in a higher order of things than that visible to the outward or newspaper eyes of men." Then, after speaking of several books that he had lately been reading, he adds: "You will perhaps think it strange that a man who sees a sea of shadows so close before him, with only a vague, though glowing light-streak beyond, should be thinking at all of theological literature and speculation. But so it is. I feel no violent emotion, that either blows me up into rapture, or puffs me down into apprehension; and I cannot live quietly and contentedly without distinct intellectual objects, as well as mere impulses of feeling; and I do not see how

I should benefit either myself or others by endeavouring to force a spurious enthusiasm. At the same time I have never, I think, for the same number of days, felt less of doubt or difficulty as to the certainty of our hope through the Saviour, than during the last fortnight. That which I should be most tempted to wish otherwise, is the necessity for abstaining from the society of my friends, which would be a great pleasure; and perhaps there are some of them to whom the calm assurance of the reality and sufficiency of the Gospel, as a message of peace, might be of some comfort. But doubtless it is, even to our eyes, wisely ordained; and I may gain more by my solitude than I could by having even Maurice with me."

It was ordered that he should spend the following winter in a warmer climate; and even then he caught at the hope of being able to engage in some useful employment. "On the whole it is my impression that I shall decide on going to the West Indies. I have some reason to believe that Government would willingly commission me to report on the schools, and other spiritual machinery of all kinds, their state, efficacy, and imperfections. I am well aware how far from competent I am to do this as might be wished,

and how extremely difficult it would be to write of Dissenters and Churchmen honestly, and yet without giving needless offence to either party. But one may always hope to do some good; and it is not clear that the Colonial Office would hit on any one who would take more pains about the matter. I sometimes think that it is possible a report written with clearness, moderation, and earnestness, graces not beyond the reach of any conscientious labourer, might do some good by its indirect bearing on education in this country. Tell me what you think; and do not be afraid to say that the project is too arduous, or that a castle in the air, in the shape of a pedagogic institute, (see the big one in the *Wanderjahre*,) is still but an air castle. I have been ordered not to work since the beginning of my illness, and have obeyed diligently by lying on a sofa and reading all manner of idlenesses. Among other things I have gone through Cary's Pindar, looking here and there at the Greek, and with profound veneration for the old Theban. He seems to me one of the most nobly religious minds I know of, in spite of his Paganism. I can hardly doubt that, if he had been born a Jew, he would have been a grand prophet. I have also amused myself with Herodotus and Thucydides, and, of

later days, Philip de Comines, all with keen relish. I own that I cannot conceive any grounds for comparing Herodotus, as a deep and comprehensive intellect, with Thucydides. But the Ionian, by his childlike receptivity, catches many traits of human nature, which Thucydides would overlook. By the way, look at the story of Rhampsinitus in the second Book, and see if it is not precisely in the manner of *the Arabian Nights.* No doubt, as told to Herodotus, it had the dramatic filling up, which is all it wants. I wish I could see a comparison drawn by Thirlwall, or some such man, between Thucydides, Tacitus, and Machiavelli. I do not know that there were ever three men of first-rate genius more akin, and yet with how great differences! I have just read two *Beilagen* by Tholuck to his Commentary on the Hebrews, which are of first-rate excellence. Sacrifice is better treated than I have ever seen; and the pages 101-8 contain the clearest, fullest, and most satisfactory statement I know of the central mystery of the Gospel."

Among the plans suggested, one was that he should spend the next winter at Rome. "On the whole (he wrote), you may suppose I look forward with some pleasure to the prospect of knowing Rome. I have always had a sort of

superstition about some mysterious fate leading me thither, and a sense of fragmentariness from not having been there, easily explicable from natural grounds, and kept down by a more rational faith. But besides this, there are obvious and great advantages in seeing such a spectacle. Yet I do assure you that on the whole the predominant feeling in my mind is one of dejection at the interruption of my serious pursuits, and the disappointment of the hopes of being of some use, which during the last few years I have begun to indulge. If I do not bake myself in a mud crust, like a hippopotamus, in summer, I must begin anew a kind of esthetic and poetic life, which I thought I had done with, and which, though under happier auspices, and, I believe, a holier guidance than of old, still fills me with an uneasiness that I think you can imagine. Doubtless all, if one will let it be so, is for the best; and whether in Rome or at Herstmonceux, among cottages or imperial ruins, "the blue sky bends over all," and is everywhere the finite image of an Infinite and All-sufficient Presence. To this we must all learn more and more to trust; and I know not why the Saviour, whom Paul preached at Rome in prison, should be imagined to abandon the

meanest of His followers in the more perilous freedom of natural life and genial cultivation."

As the time of his departure approached, he wrote: "If I recover, we shall all be happy in England next summer; and if not, though I sometimes shrink at the thought of the long, long, lonely winter, with declining health, in a foreign country, and my wife and children on the other side of the sea, the end is so sure and overwhelming as to reduce these things to a very mean insignificance. I do not however mean to call up the vulgar phantom of lackadaisical Optimism, or pretend to believe that, in a system of things full of corruption and curses, all is for the best. That it is for the best that evil should be possible, is as certain, as that it is good there should be reasonable beings. But that it is for the best that these beings should in any case choose, or have chosen evil, is an assertion which seems to me to involve the denial of the reality of evil at all; and the man who does not find this in his own breast, must either be misled by speculation to question the facts which he ought to speculate on, or must be besotted with strong drink, or the drowsier and more sensual narcotic of good-natured indifference. The common cant,—for it is really nothing else,—betrays the

weakness and vagueness of the common apprehensions as to the intensity of human wickedness, and the amount and acuteness of misery necessarily generated in a state of things in which sin is mingled as in ours. Paley's saying, *It is a happy world after all,* which some might attribute to the goodness of his heart, seems to me one of the most cruelly heartless of all human utterances. It is appalling even to a man of Christian faith, to reflect that full ninety-nine hundredths of mankind, since the beginning of history, have been little better than blindfolded victims of superstitions, or slaves of their bodily necessities,—casting out their children to hogs, as in China,—leaving their kindred to die of hunger, as in India, and among all savages,—nursed in worse than bestial confusions, as in Otaheite, and even Greece and Rome,—massacred by thousands on the tombs of their chiefs, as in Ashantee,—or similarly assassinated by the government, as in Sparta,—mowed down in millions by war, pestilence, and famine, throughout the East, the most ancient and populous countries; and these devastations laying waste the feelings and faith of men, as surely as they destroy their bodies; and all this through more than a hundred generations; while of the few who have risen into distinct self-conscious-

ness, a large, perhaps the larger proportion have made shipwreck of all practical principle, and have dreamt themselves away again into mere word-gamblers and shadow-fighters. The wonder, and the cause for thankfulness is, that, with all this, there is a vein of genial life in nature, and a vivacious strength in human hopes and traditions, and a line of light in Christianity, that make it possible for any, however few, to believe and teach that all these are the corruptions, not the constitutions of humanity. But that here and now all is for the best, is either a fiction as gross as transubstantiation, or involves a miserable denial, not only of any best, but of any real good for man. For it is curious, but I think, on reflection certain, that Optimism and Pessimism are at bottom identical. It is one of the hardest of all mysteries to imagine how it can be possible for us to remain undisturbed, even in our highest attainable elevation of being, if we should then be conscious of the reality of such horrors as are displayed in the tragedy of Cenci, as abound in the records of hospitals and prisons, such as the robbery and beating of the poor Beguine, mentioned by Vidocq, who came to visit the galley-slaves only to relieve their wants, and was by these very men thus outraged; or such as

Hogarth paints in his Idle Apprentice, on his way to transportation, jeering and defying his mother's tears. Among these inexplicable and insupportable mysteries of evil, I am of course far from reckoning the natural sorrows and sufferings, such as poor G. has had in so large a measure, and which may be, and, I believe, mostly are the best of all disciplines for the spirit."

The Roman plan was however abandoned, or, as it proved, postponed to a future year; and Sterling spent the autumn and winter of 1836, and the first half of 1837, at the house of a relation near Bordeaux. Here, being precluded by the state of his health from engaging in any work that would have required severe thought and labour, he wrote a variety of lighter things, in prose and verse, many of which were printed in *Blackwood's Magazine*. "I have made time (he says) to write a good many verses, especially most of a poem, which, I suppose, will run to more than 1500 lines, and which I call *the Sexton's Daughter*. It is an English village tale, and pleases me more than most of my attempts, because it is a step away from visions and allegories, such as I am naturally most inclined to. If I can finish it, I shall probably publish it. In the mean time Blackwood is going to publish some

short sets of verses, which I call *Lyric Leaves.* I have written a number of such poems since we parted. I find it an employment that I can carry on in the midst of interruptions from health much better than I can continuous study, especially of a speculative kind, where a dropt stitch takes one back to the beginning. I did not like to throw away good money on so bad a speculation as that of publishing poems on my own account, of the merit of which I felt extremely doubtful; and I therefore thought it a good plan to have them printed in a Magazine, and so to collect the opinions of those in whose judgements I should put more confidence than in my own." Again, after speaking of a report that a friend, whom he highly valued, was a candidate for a Professorship of Political Economy, he adds: "My view of the state and needs of the Church and of Theology in England is such, that I grudge the application of zeal and talent by any Clergyman to matters not directly those of his calling; though I am far from denying myself occasional excursions into the fields, or rather the haunted misty woods and broken glades of imaginative literature. In this way I write verses in summer, when only I can write them, and prose fragments in winter, and read what falls in my reach at all times. But

I make my unsettled life, and more unsettled health, and the want of a library, my excuse for this desultory campaigning." Again: "Blackwood is going to publish verses of mine, under the title of *Lyric Leaves*, in his Magazine. If he will let me, I shall probably go on writing for him, at all events in verse, as it will always be an inducement to correct and finish the little things that I have constantly bouncing up in my brains, and which I commonly scribble in a book, completed as to substance and outline, but not smoothed off. He wants me to send him prose; and I have dispatched a bag of scraps, under the unhappy rubric of *Crystals from a Cavern;* but I could not think of another, unless I called them *a Saturday Pie*, from the custom I have heard mentioned of cooking the broken meat in this way at the end of the week. But alas! I had no sustaining dish or ambient crust to offer. I may send him some short tales. If you see the book, you will find me out by the signatures of S. S. S. or J. J. J., unless Blackwood snips off the tail of my articles, as they do by puppies. I sign the verses S. S. S. chiefly for the sake of the pleasant self-gratulation so many people will have in turning the first S into an A." It was from Bordeaux that he made the excursion to visit Montaigne's Cha-

teau, the account of which closes the Essay upon him.

Still he did not altogether abandon severer studies; and at times he formed projects of more important works; but the line of his studies was such as to estrange him more and more from the theological and ecclesiastical opinions of our Church. "I constantly meditate (he wrote in November, 1836) larger and more connected performances, and of late have been speculating chiefly on the possibility and propriety of at last breaking the charmed sleep of English Theology by a book on the authority of the Scriptures. I sent to England for a volume on Inspiration, lately published by a learned Dissenter, a Dr. Henderson. He means well enough, but merely takes the old ground, and makes no attempt to meet the obvious objections as to discrepancies, &c.; and he is evidently much more afraid of offending his brethren by his denial of literal dictation, than of disappointing intelligent enquirers by leaving all their doubts unanswered. His argument, *e.g.* for the inspiration of Mark's Gospel, amounts nearly to this, that Mark was probably infallible, because he was an acquaintance of Peter, and because Dr. H. would be abused by other Dissenting Ministers if he allowed that he was not.

But make it ever so plain that, in upsetting this dead idol, one was striving for Christianity, and not for critical and historical science merely, yet I am persuaded that any clergyman caught in the fact must abandon all notion of acting for the future in any ecclesiastical function. It has struck me that, if my life should be prolonged, as I must probably at all events relinquish all public ministration, I might perhaps be peculiarly well situated for trying to do some good of this kind to theology. The materials are all prepared and abundant in the books of the Germans. I find that I could not conscientiously publish the things I wrote some time ago about the Old Testament. The earlier portions of it seem to me too uncertain to justify me in professing that thorough and religious faith in them which I do not entertain. Christianity however has lost none of its value in my eyes; and I read Schleiermacher with increased satisfaction. I have been looking into Bayle: he is a strange fish, with no more heart or imagination than a slug, and yet honest and good-natured." About a month after, recurring to the same topics, he says: "Of the speculative and arduous books at my command here, my favorite at present is Schleiermacher's Sermons, which I have begun to read consecutively, and find in

them infinite food for reflection, and strong and constant impulses to good. I had never read them at all till about a month ago, and I was quite unprepared for the compass and value which they seem to me to possess. I am far from wishing to set him up in opposition to minds like Tholuck's; but what they have in common, is found in him with such fulness, clearness, and comprehensiveness, and supported by, or rather supporting such an extent of knowledge, such a conscientious sobriety of judgement, and a moral structure so thoroughly earnest, disciplined, and all alive, as I have never seen rivalled in any other. He is more like Augustin than Luther, Paul than John, Baxter than Leighton. Inferior doubtless to them all, unless perhaps Baxter, in some respects, the age and country he lived in, have yet given him a peculiar value for us, as dealing with the circumstances and the knowledge which are a part of our actual world, and which are so full for us all, of perplexity as well as of help.—Much more diffused as Christian life probably is in England than in any other country, we are perhaps rather hasty in jumping to the conclusion that what there is, is more advanced than on the Continent. Of course I am not speaking of the mass in either

case, but only of those whose minds are habitually governed by a love for the will of God, as revealed to us in Christ. It is very difficult to form any comparison from personal experience; and I suppose, as to numbers, if there is one such person in Britain out of fifty, there may be one in five hundred on the Continent. But if I were to judge from the religious books in England and Germany, which are far more attainable and certain grounds, I should say that the Christianity of the one country more resembled that of the Apostles before Pentecost, and that of the other the matured mind of Paul and John. However this may be, I will own to you,—for I do not know why I should not deal with you in all sincerity, —that I find myself more and more removed from all the views in which the Church of England divines differ from the foreign Protestant Churches. I cannot trace this tendency to any corrupt self-indulgence of my own, but find that, the more I endeavour to draw near in heart, mind, and life to the Saviour, and the more earnestly I strive to know and do the will of God, the less I seem disposed to admit anything like the claims of a hierarchy, venerable though it may be as a monument, and useful as an instrument, or to believe in any normal outward

institution, by Christ or the apostles, of rulers and teachers in the Church. The divine authority of such seems to me merely identical with their evangelic value. I write these things, because I know you would rather have the conclusions of a sincere mind, than the compliances of a hypocritical one. I feel no pleasure, but great pain, in differing from so many of the wisest and holiest of my countrymen; but I dare not lie for God."

In the following April, he again spoke of Schleiermacher's Sermons: "They kept possession of me for a long time, till I was knocked into chaos by heavy illness, from which I have now been relieved for about two months; and, though somehow I have not got back to Schleiermacher, I still think of him as, on the whole, the greatest spiritual teacher I have ever fallen in with. I cannot make up my mind as to the essential difference between him and Coleridge, which, I presume, is what Steffens alludes to in his little mortuary tract. In order to do so, I must study Schleiermacher and the others long and continuously. I suppose they would deny his right to establish an exclusive scheme of self-consciousness, and would rather start from the Truths which self-consciousness presupposes. But I

have been too much driven about by illness and distraction to fix my mind on speculations of this compass.—I still feel that, if I had health and books, one of the best services I could render to England would be a full exposition of the relation in which the Bible stands to Christianity. I do not think any preliminary volume of sermons would supply the place of that evident and deep conviction of the Gospel, which must be seen and felt to underlie and support the whole enquiry. This would satisfy the few who are at once intelligent and conscientious; and the rest nothing will satisfy but servile acquiescence."

The political state of England at this time disturbed him a good deal. "I read the English papers regularly, and not always with pleasure. But on the whole I am growing less and less hopeful of any good from Toryism, and more inclined to try to make the best of an inevitable democracy. I urged S. R. to pay the Church-rates out of the taxes, and to do as much for the Dissenting chapels; but he said it could not be carried. Something of the kind will ultimately be our only escape from the voluntary system; and I should be glad to make the compromise at once.—I have never for many years doubted that the Government ought to be in the

hands of the ἄριστοι, and not of the δῆμος. But I have certainly grown more and more discontented at the want of faith in their own principles, or in any principles, among the Conservatives,—more and more satisfied that those who look higher and see further than the hour and the cart-rut among them, have really not the guidance of the party, and that its management is in the hands of purblind, peddling selfishness. With the Radicals, I mean the higher order among them, such as write *the London Review*, I am as little pleased as you can be, regarding them as men; for on the highest matters their minds are in a purely negative state. But they have a political faith, and far from an ungenerous one, on behalf of their countrymen; and for it they are willing to make sacrifices, and act with a zeal, perfectly heroic, compared with the mere tradesman-like dabbling and shuffling of the Carlton Club. Moreover, when I compare *the Westminster Review*, in its origin, with *the London Review* now, I shall find it hard to point out a body of men in Europe, mixing with politics, who have improved so much as these writers. If I could give to conscientious and intelligent aristocrats their power over the people, I would do it to-morrow; but I see no such men in any osten-

sible position, and with any chance in their favour in England."

The appearance of the cholera in Italy and the south of France in the summer of 1837 compelled Sterling to abandon his intention of spending the ensuing winter at Nice or at Pisa; and he brought his family back to England, still cherishing a hope that he might be allowed to turn his banishment to some use by exerting himself for the better education of the negroes in the West Indies. This however was absolutely forbidden by his physicians; and that he might not be exposed to the temptations, so difficult for him to resist, of a hurtful activity, he was sent to Madeira. "Of course (he wrote) the removal from my family is bitter enough; but it has the great and indispensable alleviation, that I am sure it is the right step to take. If I can continue for the next eight months in my present health, I trust I may then fix myself in England, which would be an inestimable blessing. You can perhaps conceive what a weariness of the spirit it is, that I can undertake nothing of any compass without distractions and interruptions every three or four months, either from illness or removal. Life ceases to be a chain, and falls into a heap of broken links.—I have been so knocked about for

17865

the last four months, that I have hardly had a quiet thought on any subject; and I am looking forward with delight to being still, even at the distance I shall be at from all I love. But for me there is no quiet possible without much activity of mind; so that I may perhaps be able to show you on my return some fruits, however unripe, of my solitude."

Some of these fruits were sent before long to *Blackwood's Magazine.* A fortnight after his arrival in Madeira, he wrote: "I have not yet got much work in hand; for I have been putting together a third series of *Crystals,* which, I fear, are rather poor, and a fourth tale of Legendary Lore, called *the Armour and the Skeleton;* but it has been knocked off at a heat, and, I fancy, will turn out to be a mere grotesque, and, as it aims higher, will be a failure.—But I hope to proceed on something like a plan for the remainder of the winter, if I remain so long in this Island of Madeira, and this larger island of a larger ocean, which we call the World. I have not yet my task very clearly defined before me; but I wish to try if I can make anything out of some theological notions that are floating about me, like the fair white vapours round the crags of these mountains. I have brought with me some of the best

of the German theologians; but my apparatus of books is still very scanty for any purpose but my own instruction; and when it is a question of teaching others, completeness becomes an object not to be overlooked. However the great thing is, not to let any powers within one rust, but to exercise them earnestly and hopefully, in the faith that sooner or later one will thus be able to help others. It was very remarkable to observe on board the vessel the number of persons of strong faith and very pleasing character; and I believe there are many more here than I know of. There is also an English Church, which has sprung up within a few years, and is now rather flourishing, under the care of a very good man, a Mr. Lowe, of Christ's, Cambridge."

Two months after he wrote: "I was occupied busily for about a month in writing a story which interested me much, not by its plan, but by the sides of life and thought which it led me to develope. My tale, which I call *the Onyx Ring*, is now nearly finished and copied out; but I see so much questionable in its structure, that I think I shall ask you to read it in manuscript, and use your judgement about sending it to Blackwood. It is a great satisfaction to me to find that my

own opinions about my things in Blackwood exactly agree with yours. I prefer the poems you mention, and find the faults that you complain of, which I shall try to avoid in future compositions. *The Lady of the Castle* never satisfied me. I sent it, I fancy, only for the foolish reason that I had written it; and I am sure, or think, I should not have done so, if I had known of La Motte Fouqué's poem on the same subject. I have a ballad on a subject handled by Uhland; and, on seeing his, I suppressed mine. In fact, my life has been so broken, busy, and sometimes so agitated, that I have never, till within the last two years, made any progress towards technical skill; and I feel my own weakness in every sentence I write, of prose or verse. The Editor's comments are, as you observe, stuff; only I persuade myself I shine through them, like a paper lantern on a stall through a London fog.—I have read a good deal of Thirlwall's History over again, and have found even more in it than I had supposed. I can name no history in English at all comparable to it for depth and compass, unless,—prepare to laugh,—Carlyle's. But the one lights up the darkness of the past with lamps, which seem reflexions of the immortal stars above them; the other with a wide

and red volcanic glare, in which the world appears half dying into spectral vapour, half flaming into intenser life."

This admiration for the *History of Greece*, and for its author's other writings, was often expressed. "His Essay *On the Irony of Sophocles*," he says in one letter, "seems to me the most exquisite criticism I ever read." Again in another: "I have read Thirlwall's second volume, which has filled me with admiration. It is droll to see the dull puffs printed by the publishers, in which a writer as great as Thucydides and Tacitus, and with far more knowledge than they, is lumped with Moore and Mackintosh and Sir Walter Scott. Even for my peculiar objects, there is more valuable material and fructifying principle in the book, than in almost any I know; and besides the overflowing knowledge, there is throughout a glow of austere enthusiasm, characteristic of the very highest minds."

All the while he continued to indulge in his favorite speculations. "I have not written a word, or read many pages, as to theology, but have thought a good deal, and with much satisfaction. On many points I am not less sceptical, perhaps more than ever; but I have, on the whole, a lively and progressive confidence in

Christian truth, and enjoy so much peace, clearness, and activity, that all clouds appear to me not portions of the sky, but obscurations of it, and therefore sure in time to vanish. I seem to see distinctly that the hour must come for the disclosure to England of a scientific theory of the Bible; which however will not, in my view, directly affect the faith of the multitude, but will certainly modify all our theology and theological no-education. I hold it nearly immaterial for the ultimate result, whether this revolution shall be brought about by the writings of an infidel, or of a scientific believer; but of course most important for the believer's own being, if he should do the work, not to feel or write, even momentarily, as an infidel. I can, I trust, sincerely affirm, that I am in heart as ready to receive the whole narrative of the Pentateuch, as that of Paul's preaching at Ephesus and Athens, if the grounds of belief were equal; but where there is a clear conviction of the reason, I feel less and less inclined to approve of an entire and contented suppression of one's opinion on such subjects. I find the Evangelicals I have fallen in with here more tolerant than I expected, when once they are satisfied that a man is sincere in heart, and not a concealed scoffer.—I have just been looking again over Pusey's Answer

to Rose, and find it very interesting. I think it more nearly than any other English book I know expresses my theological opinions; and the image it raises of the man is truly delightful."

Among the friends whom he made here, was one who continued in the inner circle of them during the remainder of his life. "I have drawn a good deal tighter my bonds with one of my friends, Dr. Calvert, a physician, nephew of Wordsworth's Raisley Calvert. He is full of strong sense, conscience, and kindness, and has seen a great deal of the fine world, of which I know nothing, so that his anecdotes always interest me. He has taken to reading diligently my books of German theology, Olshausen, Schleiermacher, Twesten, &c.; and we have infinite gossip about these topics, strengthening each other mutually in the faith that Revelation is not a sandhill of texts. He is an Oriel man, a contemporary and friend of Froude's, but quite opposed to Puseyism."—"But what I chiefly mourn for is, that I hear of no adequate development of faith and intelligence in opposition to this perverse and fantastic school.—John Mill has now obtained the uncontrolled management of *the London Review*; and he is very anxious to make it a larger and freer kind of organ. He has written to persuade me to con-

tribute; but I have answered him that for several reasons I cannot do so at present. In fact, I much doubt whether I could write anything for him worth printing. At all events it is pleasant to know that he unquestionably aims at widening and humanizing the radical world. As to politics, I of course hear little; but I am still persuaded the Radicals will before many years be in power, from the inadequacy of our upper classes to the awful functions they are invested with. The education of the people is my great question; and I should augur nothing but good and blessings, if I could only see the clergy, as a body, sensible of the immensity of their duties in that respect. As it is, I expect democracy, and democratic education, and the ultimate downfall of the Church."

From the winter in Madeira Sterling derived much benefit; and he spent the summer of 1838 in England, in a greatly improved state of health. At this time he wrote the essays on Montaigne and Simonides for *the London Review*. In the former there were several things, both in the matter and style, that displeased me; and I wrote to express my objections with a good deal of severity; which I mention for the sake of inserting the following letter. It exhibits a beau-

tiful feature in Sterling's character, the readiness and thankfulness with which he listened to censures upon his writings, a feature always characteristic of him, though very rarely found in the irritable race of authors. "Your letter, which I received this afternoon too late for the post, has affected me so much, thatI cannot do any work till I have acknowledged it. I need not tell you that I am grateful for your kindness in writing as you do about my article on Montaigne; but how deeply and sincerely I thank you, that I cannot tell you. From everybody, with one other exception, I have heard only flattery about it, which to a considerable extent my own knowledge contradicted. I knew that the earlier half of the essay is dim and struggling, struggling partly to escape from obscurity, and showing the struggle, but not achieving clearness. I also felt, in reading it over connectedly in print, that there are jerks and wilful oddities of expression, which I should be very anxious to efface, if that were now possible. And seeing so much wrong, I am sure there must be much more, which others, if they were equally earnest, and only equally competent with myself, would see more distinctly than I can. In the main purpose and design of the article, I did not perceive that I had gone wrong; but even

as to this I may well be in error. I wrote it in scraps, and with confused hurry, which annoyed me so much that I certainly should have stopped, had I not promised M. to try to help him."

Still, notwithstanding the improvement in his health, it was deemed advisable that Sterling should pass the next winter also abroad; and this year he was allowed to accomplish the wish he had long cherished of going to Rome. He travelled with his friend, Dr. Calvert, through Belgium, up the Rhine, across Switzerland, and came down upon Milan. His absence from home this time proved rich in enjoyment, chiefly from the opportunities it afforded him of studying many of the best remains of ancient and of Christian art. For, though he never handled a pencil himself, he had always a fine eye for works of art, and a special delight in contemplating beauty under artistical forms, as is apparent in several of his earliest compositions. Thus from Lausanne he wrote: "On the whole the objects that have most struck me since I left England are the pictures I saw in Belgium; all those which I care much about, except one Perugino and one Fra Bartolomeo, being of the old Transalpine School, with which I was before entirely unacquainted. Van Eyck, rather the two Van Eycks, Memmling, and

Matsys, are great men of the past, with whom I seem to have become familiar, and who have helped to strengthen the sense of the seriousness and depth of human life, and of the immediate relation it stands in to a good above it. Their faults and defects seem, like those of their period in history, to be instructive, as showing how much of limitedness, and even of utter weakness, is compatible with earnest and devout power; and the history of painting since their day, as well as all other history, appears to show that mankind will always be working against this narrowness, and try to gain strength in the direction where it feels itself weak, carrying on this process also in an exclusive and exaggerated spirit, and not, till after long and many trials, able to combine its earlier and later gains and faculties into a proportioned and balanced unity. This again dissolves and loses itself in frivolity and extravagance, out of which the world rises, after painful experiences, and recurs to the old types and methods, using them with the addition of wider knowledge and more perfect means, till the new period in turn beats against its bounds, partly breaks over them, and partly breaks them down, and, in pursuing a fresh aim, seems for a time to sacrifice much which it had before acquired. But no doubt,

through all these changes, the ideal universe is unfolding itself into fact; and it is a high privilege to be able consciously to help the work, in however small a department. Well, if we could also remember and feel, that, to do this truly, we must start from a personal life, rooted in and harmonizing with the centre of all. The want of this personal first principle seems the fatal curse of all dilettantism and cultivated coxcombry, artistic and religious, and specially ruins all those persons whom I have seen professing the elegances and refinements of the Neo-catholic doctrine. But you see I have been running off into speculations, which in the eternal fitness of things have no business at the post-office."

At Florence he of course recurred with increased interest to the same subject. "I spent some days at Bologna, where it seemed to me that the Caraccis' pictures, and those of their followers, were like things produced by most ingenious machines of pictorial Perkinses and Babbages. I rejoiced in Francia and Perugino, and thought the St. Cecilia a dazzling piece of incongruity, the form of the painting being that of the simple visionary style of earlier times, and the sentiment and execution that of beautiful but not devout nature. I had before seen Parma, as well

as Milan, and grown to love Luini, Correggio, and the Sposalizio. Here I breathe, if not the most ennobling, certainly the most delightful air of my life. The two Galleries, and the aspect of the town, keep me in a state of harmless intoxication, more coherent than dream, more exciting than rational insight, half poetry, half religion, or rather the pure enthusiasm which is common to both, clad in the fairest visible forms of nature and imagination. I fancy I write nonsense; but it is because I can find no sense to express the kind of childish, yet intellectual, joy which Florence perpetually feeds in me. The Venus shakes my allegiance to her of Melo, without having overthrown it. It seems the perfection of innocent beauty, neither melted into passion, nor raised to piety. The contrast, on the one and baser hand, is Titian's, and, on the other and nobler, the Madonna del Cardellino; but the statue is perhaps the least like anything I was familiar with before. Diana's virgins might learn modesty from it; and I think it must produce something of a similar influence on every one who looks at it. I do not think Raphael's pictures have raised my previous estimate of him, though they have rendered it much more lively. The Madonna del Gran Duca, and the Cardellino

give me as high and pure pleasure as any. The Seggiola is an age forward in experience of life and human feeling, as well as talent; but it has none of the Perugian piety. It does not however seem to me at all mistaken or spurious, except perhaps in the praying St. John, who seems to have no business there; for the picture has nothing to do with Christianity.—My chief regret arises from the obscure feeling that I am capable of doing some good to others, and that I am not attempting it. But the cultivation of one's own sense for whatever is loveliest and highest in the world is not a mere idle amusement, and may some day or other issue in fruits, valuable much more than in proportion to the time apparently lost in producing them. The work which would most interest me would be a prose fiction of some kind; but I cannot bring myself to believe that I ought, for the purpose of embodying in this way my views of life, to give up my first, and probably last opportunity of studying the masterpieces of all the creative arts, except the verbal and musical."

The winter of 1838-9 he spent at Rome, with Dr. Calvert, who was long confined to his room by what almost seemed to be the last stage of consumption, and whom Sterling nursed "equally

ready (as Dr. Calvert said) to read the Bible, go into the deepest Christian philosophy, or to toast his bread for him;"—and his letters from thence are full of the delight which he derived from his abode there. "During the last three months I have seen, felt, breathed little but Rome. My residence here has not only been as favorable to my health as could possibly have been anticipated, but has given me more of deep and constant pleasure than I could well have imagined, or at all hoped. I have not attempted to gain originality by differing from all mankind, but have been content to see and reverence the greatness of Raphael and Michael Angelo. Both of them exceed my fancy of their excellence, but, I think, Michael most. For I had not been prepared for him by any works comparable to the Cartoons for extent and variety; and the Frescoes of the Sistine seem to me to rise far beyond even the sculptures of the Medicean Chapel at Florence. He has interested me so deeply, that I hope, on my return to England, to write some sort of notice of him, especially as I think he is not at all appreciated by most English people. Taking character and genius both into account, he seems to me the greatest Italian since Dante. Of Raphael I think like all the world, except that

he does not give me the impression of a very high or pure religious spirit. I find the works previous to 1500 of inexhaustible interest. My want is that of more complete knowledge of the sculptures in the Vatican: but I am afraid of the cold; and I fear I shall quit Rome still very ignorant of them. The statue of a sleeping female, which used to be called Cleopatra, and now Ariadne, gives me, I think, as much pleasure as any other. I conceive it to be the nymph of a fountain. But I think all the gratification which any works of art here give me, is little, in comparison with that derived from the general look of Rome and the country round it. The views which combine the city with the Campagna and the mountains, strike me as the grandest in style and the most thoroughly poetic I have ever seen. It would require not only exquisite poetry, but this united with a divine music, to render the sort of impression made by these prospects. That, for instance, from the front of St. John Lateran, from the Pincian, from San Pietro in Montorio, and especially from Sant Onofrio, the Convent of Tasso, the lonely tranquillity of the Aventine, and all that opens round it,—indeed any spot in Rome which gives a glimpse of the mountains, raises and harmonizes the mind, not only as the

nobler aspects of the world always do, but with unrivalled fulness of imagery, and with a thoughtful sense of personal reconciliation to the lot of humanity. A great moral, which words cannot compass, lives about one in the silent, lasting poetry of all one sees. In such feelings one loses no doubt for a time any tendency to action, and one is willing to let one's own life slip away into the wondrous stream of existence which reflects forms so large and bright. For a while the sibyls seem no better than sirens. But one returns swiftly to the world of action and will, with better strength and more serious faith; and the very visions one has been lost in, force on one's mind the truth, or rather truism, that Rome was not built by thinking a building, but by building a thought.—Far as Rome is from England, it has probably kept you more frequently before me than any other place even in England would have done. Much of my time here has past away in mere reverie about former parts of my life, and the persons I have best known. For, spending many hours in wandering about the outskirts of the city, and looking at the outsides of things, the images of those most familiar to me naturally rise to people the scene, and add their figures to the motley variety who still

live in the flesh, and the bewildering train whose spirits haunt the City of Ruins.—How the aspect of modern Rome, the churches, the ceremonies, and the Papal court, should produce any of the Romanizing appetite, is to me a puzzle. I have seen the Pope in all his pomp at St. Peter's; and he looked to me a mere lie in livery. The Romish controversy is doubtless a much more difficult one than the managers of the Religious Tract Society fancy, because it is a theoretical dispute; and, in dealing with notions and authorities, I can quite understand how a mere student in a library, with no eye for facts, should take either one side or the other. But how any man, with clear head and honest heart, and capable of seeing realities, and distinguishing them from scenic falsehoods, should, after living in a Romanist country, and especially at Rome, be inclined to side with Leo against Luther, I cannot understand.—I have never found my interest in the objects around me flag since the day I left England; and the months that have since passed seem in the retrospect like part of an eternal existence, in which one should take in all the different aspects of existence at a glance, and without the succession, and therefore mutual expulsions, to which our impressions are subjected in time."

Still, in the midst of this life of esthetical and poetical enjoyment, Sterling retained his lively interest in the state of our Church. "Your account of religious doings in England (he wrote) is extremely satisfactory; and, however men may differ as to the amount of change desirable, it is clear that there is some progress in a right direction. There are of course two great lines in which improvement may take place,—the one that of outward, the other that of inward life in the Church, which are often inseparable, sometimes not easily distinguishable. I suppose most, though not all, of what is doing amongst us, is the adjustment and extension of our actual scheme, the building of churches, establishment of schools, enforcing residence of clergymen, and so forth, which is all of high, and, above all with us, most urgent importance. That which connects itself most closely with one's personal feelings and pursuits, would be change of another kind, namely, a renewal of the spirit of theology in the Church, bringing with it, as it necessarily would, a progress beyond the existing state of knowledge usual among our divines, which recognises nothing but the old creeds and forms of the Fathers,—that portion of scholastic doctrine which in Protestant countries survived the Reformation,—the pecu-

liarities of the Reformation itself,—the results of the long struggle between Puritanism and Arminianism,—and, lastly, the negative moderation of the last century. Something of all this is more or less consciously admitted into the views of every cultivated religious teacher in England, who is not originally precluded by his character from the possibility of cultivation, as clay from being polished into rubies. But it is evident that this compilation omits any living sense of the spirit and tendencies of the Fathers, looks only at some fragmentary results of the Scholastic Theology, altogether disowns, or rather ignores, the great mystical teachers who hold so fast an idea that Scepticism cannot meddle with, and, the most noticeable point of all, will not hear of the application to Christian history of the conjoint principles of criticism and construction, which, it daily becomes plainer, will even in England have their course with regard to all so-called profane tradition, which in truth is only profane so far as it is false, and, thus transmuted and resurgent, becomes divine. These are thoughts, which, you must know, have long been striking deeper and deeper root in me. But I trust they do not make me unjust to the wonderful amount of devotion, zeal, humanity, practical energy, and real Christian life,

among the upper classes in England, which, in the midst of all manner of sectarian follies and fantastic conceits, render the Church among us in some respects a witness and example to all other Christian communities." Again: "The theological and moral questions of the day seem constantly gaining in compass and general interest; and I hear of little done in what seems to me a right direction. And seeing, as I think, the need, and also the craving, for higher and larger truth than is commonly diffused, and the want of persons to supply what the occasion demands, I think very often of the possibility of doing something, however little, to brighten my own hour of history, if not any future ones. I have written some short moral and theological essays, which I can easily add to, and which, with others I have at home, would make a book, not formally systematic, but, I trust, earnest and coherent."

He had left his wife in England, expecting the birth of her fifth child, "an event which," he said, "seems more than usually anxious from my absence at such a distance. But both the truths which inspire true philosophy, and the experience of life, abundantly teach one that time and space, which are so definitely measurable by machinery, are yet for human beings almost as variable, and

as completely under the sway of the will and the higher affections, as thoughts and actions themselves; and shrink and fade, or spread to infinitude, in accordance with the folding or expansion of the soul's cherubic wings. How often one finds in life, that an idea, which one may have met in youth made visible in words, but also veiled in them, and which in this shape has haunted one with a vague sense of something divine, but dim and inscrutable, becomes, at the call of conscience, or when real events and beings give it its fit body, the open aspect of a messenger from Heaven, and the familiarfriend of all one's after-days! Many things, as well as the point which now suggests it, have often, and specially of late, led me to this reflection. And there is something like, in an inferior degree, to the same experience in the distinctness of the forms which travelling and the sight of Switzerland and Italy have given in my mind to images, which before, at best, were featureless as clouds, and often, by a process which you will understand, though not easy to explain, seemed to spread their shapeless dusk over all the rest of one's conceptions, and to change from clouds in a clear sky to mists darkening the whole earth. I did not sit down with malice prepense to mystify either you or myself

with dissertations; but the top of a pen is a favourite haunt for imps of all kinds, from which they guide the motions of the nib, often with more violence than discretion." On hearing that the expected child died a few weeks after its birth, he immediately returned to England, with a good deal of risk to his health, but with no serious injury. Here, after much deliberation, it was determined that Clifton would be the best place for him to fix his family in, whence he might move in the winter to the coast of Devonshire or Cornwall, or, in case of need, to a more southern latitude.

Sterling had a foreboding, as has been seen, that his journey to Rome was to exercise a momentous influence upon him; and so in a certain sense it did. As the years which Goethe spent in Italy formed the turning point in his life, when the fervid German poet ripened, not without some impairing of his previous powers, into the exquisite cosmopolite artist, in like manner a change not wholly dissimilar took place at this epoch in the character and bent of Sterling's mind and pursuits. In lieu of the dread with which he had looked forward to the necessity of employing himself again in poetry and fine literature, he seemed henceforward rather to regard

this as his chief vocation, and as one of the highest, if not the very highest, of all vocations. This arose from his being compelled to abandon all projects of works requiring continuous thought and study: for it is a sort of law of our nature to attach a paramount significance to the particular work, whatever it may be, that we are engaged in,—a law in many respects very salutary in its operation, as else we should seldom devote ourselves to our work heartily,—a law too by which energetic characters, like Sterling's, are the most swayed. Indeed the whole course of this narrative has shown with what intensity he gave himself up to the immediate object of his aim; and often he could not well do this, without casting some disparagement upon other objects, even, it might be, upon those about which he had been no less zealous a little before. Besides, the sights with which his travels so richly supplied him, were the fulfilment and satisfying of early longings and visions about art, which gave them a greater power over him. An indication of this change of view, which became a co-operating cause in increasing it, was his growing admiration of Goethe; of whom, in one of his earlier letters, he had said: "I am more and more convinced that Goethe rescues the individual from contending

passions, not to animate it with new life, but to bury it amid the pomps and beneath the mausoleum of Art,"—of whom too, even in *the Onyx Ring*, he has given such a cold, repulsive, almost hateful representation in the character of Walsingham; whereas in his latter years he regarded Goethe as one of the greatest, not merely among poets, but also among moral teachers. Moreover, in consequence of Sterling's complete withdrawal from the practical ministerial life, the negative tendencies of his theological speculations were continually gaining strength. Such a negative element exists in all minds; and only by its proper subjugation can the intellect and will of the individual be brought into harmony with the universal. As I have said in another place, Man's first word is *Yes;* his second, *No;* his third and last, *Yes:* and while the bulk of men stop short at the first, very few attain to the third. For it is not to be attained once for all, nor ever completely. The negative spirit will abide with us, so long as there is evil in ourselves; and it ought to abide in us so long as there is evil in the world. For this is its office, to deny that evil, to strive against, and to annul it. Hence it is especially strong in those who are framed for energetic action,—in those who, beholding the enor-

mous evils in the existing state of things, are seized with a burning desire to deliver the world from them. When this spirit is rightly regulated,—when the *No* is taken up into a higher *Yes*, as the negative commandments of the Law pass into the positive commandments of the Gospel,—when a man has come to the conviction that the only beneficent way of denying a prevalent falsehood is by asserting the opposite higher truth, and that in like manner, to overthrow evil, he must strive earnestly and perseveringly to establish good,—he who acts according to this conviction will, in one mode of action, become a patriotic hero,—in another, a philosophic sage,—in another, through that atonement, which, having sought, he will find, a saint. But in order that this negative tendency may be restrained from mischievous exaggeration, it requires almost indispensably to be counterbalanced and kept in check by the sobering influences of practical activity, which is under the necessity of taking the actual as the ground of its operations, and, unless in an age of chaotic revolution, ever uses what exists as the material for its new structures. On the other hand, when the waywardness and frowardness of the intellect are without that wholesome check, which arises from the need of shaping our speculations in conformity to

the objects we have to deal with, a person is apt to run riot in mere negations, and may almost get at length to hear nothing but the echoes of his own *No* through all the recesses of his mind. Bitter too is the privation, when we feel that we have a work to do, that it is a work which ought to be done, and see no one else likely to do it, yet find it perpetually snatched away by a Tantalic fate from our grasp; whereas all, especially genial spirits, derive a solace and joy from their appropriate work, even as Nature rejoices in her vernal and autumnal parturition. In truth, to the generality of minds, perhaps to all, but pre-eminently to those who are framed for vigorous action, action is a necessity, without the help of which speculation will work itself up into a feverish disease; as has been manifested over and over again in history, not merely by individuals, but by whole classes; for instance, by the Greek Sophists, by the Schoolmen in the middle ages, and by many deplorable phenomena in the recent Philosophy and Theology of Germany. Even in physical science, where the Will is much less intrusive to mislead the Understanding, the ages anterior to Bacon furnish an endless series of illustrations how prone Speculation is to wander, whenever it slips away even for a moment from the leading-

strings of Experience. For while Truth is ever circular, and bends its course round its invisible centre, Speculation flies off at every point in a tangent, and, if left to follow its own impulses, loses itself in a notional vacuity. Thus in manifold ways are we taught that our Lord's saying is the declaration of a universal law: to know truth, of whatsoever kind, we must do it.

These remarks are called from me here, where I am about to speak of the latter years of my dear friend's life, and of the changes which took place in his opinions on subjects of the highest moment. We have seen how he attached himself to critical theology, and with what continually increasing interest he studied that of Germany. The tendency of his early education had been negative, after that mode of negativeness which we may remember as characteristic of such as drew their opinions from the oracles of *the Edinburgh Review* thirty years ago. A variety of influences, among others the fascination of Coleridge's genius, drew him away from this negative state, and wrought a temporary reconciliation with that which is best and soundest in the faith and institutions of his countrymen. Under these and other calming and sobering influences, he took orders. How he did so, how he

devoted himself to the duties thus incurred, with his whole heart and soul, we have seen. Still there was always a broad divergence in his opinions from those which are held by the great body of the Church, the very same divergence of which Coleridge speaks in his *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit.* Those Confessions, though they were not printed till after Coleridge's death, had been written many years before: he kept them back with the purpose, which, like so many of his purposes, came to nought, of adding the half which is still wanting to complete the argument. Sterling however had read them in manuscript with delight and sympathy, had been permitted to transcribe them, and had adopted the views concerning Inspiration expressed in them, deeming these views, as Coleridge did, to be thoroughly compatible with a deep and lively Christian faith, and with a full reception of all that is essential in the doctrines of our Church. Had Sterling been allowed to continue in the practical labours of the ministry, we may feel a trustful assurance that he would have gone on from strength to strength, and that the Truth, which he served so devotedly, would have manifested itself more and more clearly to his understanding. But when he was arrested in his

course of practical activity, and had only to employ himself in speculation, his negative convictions became stronger and stronger. The extracts from his letters show this. They show too what weight he attached to his views on the inspiration of the Scriptures. Herein he was confirmed by the exaggerated importance ascribed in our popular theology to certain ignorant, uncritical, baseless assumptions concerning literal inspiration. But an error, especially when it is dominant, will drive its opponents into the very opposite error; and one exaggeration provokes another. They who discern what is false in it, see that falsehood through a magnifying glass, and, fixing their gaze solely thereon, lose sight of the truth which it enfolds and distorts. We have seen how Sterling grew to regard an intelligent theory of inspiration, and of the relation between the Bible and the faith which it conveys, as the most pressing want of our Church. That it is a most pressing one is indeed certain; and such it has long been acknowledged to be by those who meditate on theology. But in this, as in all other, nay, more almost than in any other matters, little good and far more harm will be done by the removal of the error, if in removing it we cut down the tree round which the parasite

has clung. For a state of blank negation is also an error, and a more ghastly one. If Sterling's health had allowed him to execute his first projects, his aim would have been rather to set free and establish the truth, than to destroy the error. But after every fresh interruption of his work, finding himself more and more precluded from all prospect of treating the question in its full compass and its widest bearings, he grew to concentrate his mind more and more on this one negative point. At the same time he became withdrawn more and more from other theological speculations, by finding his chief occupation in literature; and he felt more and more estranged from our Church, and even from some of the friends whom he had previously loved and revered the most, but who, he thought, could hardly look with much indulgence on a person separated from them by so broad a difference. Besides, there is a certain high-minded loyalty, which incites the generous to devote themselves to the service of a truth, when they conceive it to be unduly neglected and condemned; and this itself acts as a motive on them to exaggerate its claims to homage. There are those too,—and Sterling was one,—on whom the power of such loyalty is only the stronger, when it requires great and arduous sacrifices,

such as he believed himself to be making in a large forfeiture of esteem and affection.

This he expected to incur by the first thing that he wrote after his return to England, his Essay on Carlyle. This essay was meant to be a just tribute to a friend, whom for some years he had honoured and loved with an ever increasing affection and admiration. He had purposed to write it before he went to Italy: "When I have done with Simonides (he said), I intend to try if I can write an essay on Carlyle. I shall not do it at all completely; but I do not know any one else who would be likely to do it, and would do it better. An essay on him by Maurice would be of very great value, far beyond anything I can hope to do; but I may perhaps bring out some points that he would not touch upon." This plan was postponed however in consequence of his journey, and not resumed till he went to Clifton. Thence he wrote: "My work has been writing a review of Carlyle's Miscellaneous Works. I suppose it must be fifty pages; and I have left out a great deal that I had written. It has cost me trouble, and given me knowledge, but will, I fear, satisfy few or none, and disturb many. Those who do not understand it will of course dislike it; and perhaps those who do may still more bitterly

disapprove it. But, though I expect to lose friends and gain enemies, I am glad of having spoken out what seems to me true. It was written because I thought myself bound to stand up, when no one else would, on behalf of views which I believe, and think important. But it was also written in the midst of distractions of all kinds, and under frequent pains and languors, which necessitated strong explosions of will to control them, such as can hardly have failed to give an over violent, broken, harsh, and altogether excessive character both to the style and opinions."

About the same time he read Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, a book which a person can hardly read without being more or less hurt by it. If we walk through mire, some of it will stick to us, even when we have no other aim than to make our way through it, much more when we dabble about in it and sift it. Such too must be the case with those who pass through any sort of moral mire. The only security for such persons is, when their purpose is, with God's help, to purify the mire. Then we may converse with publicans and sinners, as Howard, as Elizabeth Fry, as Sarah Martin did, as so many others have done, following the example of their heavenly Master, whose garments were only whitened by what to

others would have been pollution. Such a purpose is a charm, which will enable one to pass through the fire unharmed, and to touch the plague-stricken without being infected. But mere curiosity will not do this; nor will the mere desire of knowledge. So too is it with the books, of whatsoever kind, written to overthrow or undermine any of those truths, which are set before us as the lodestars of our moral nature. He who reads such books out of curiosity, will find more or less of the mire cleaving to him. So will he who has no higher principle than the mere love of knowledge. If we take up a red-hot coal, we shall not quench its fire, albeit we do so to ascertain whether it will really burn us; and to take up a red-hot coal would be safer than to read Helvetius and the *Système de la Nature.* When we see every story which we have held sacred from our childhood, twisted and torn and mangled in all manner of ways,—when the utmost ingenuity of a dexterous advocate, scraping together the results of all that previous advocates have effected, is employed in picking holes in the New Testhment, in fabricating absurdities, in detecting or devising inconsistencies and contradictions,—how can one allow one's mind to dwell among such contemplations, without having one's

reverence impaired by them? If we have the shield of faith, we can indeed repel these, as well as all other fiery darts, but not otherwise; and he who has that shield, will be too deeply conscious of his own weakness in holding it, to expose himself without some strong need amongst them. Such maxims, it may be objected, would preclude all serious, earnest, candid enquiry, if a man is never to read a book, until his mind is made up to reject whatever in it militates against his preconceived notions; and thus the only happy lot of humanity would be one of perpetual stagnation. But this is far beyond my mark. I merely meant to point out that great dangers compass those who venture into regions where they are taught to regard all their previous convictions as futile and groundless. As the poet has so grandly expressed it,

> "The intellectual power through words and things
> Goes sounding on, a dim and perilous way."

Thus it has done: and thus it will do. We cannot arrest it: but the way is "dim and perilous;" and many are continually making shipwreck during the progress of discovery. Moreover, in Sterling's peculiar case, that which to the bulk of English readers would have been very repulsive in Strauss, his Hegelian philosophy, was on the con-

trary an attraction. Not that he had ever had leisure to study and become familiar with Hegel, and the other masters of German philosophy. But, through his early intercourse with Coleridge and others, he had been prepared to welcome them, and to sympathize with them; and being thus prepared, their logic, their great powers of analysis and construction, the comprehensiveness of their views of nature and of man, their conscientiousness in examining all details, and their determination to dig down to the principles of all things, delighted and almost dazzled him. Thus he was unable altogether to resist the fascination of those pantheistic tendencies, which Philosophy, in her wiser moments, has ever been trying to escape from, but which, when she fancies herself safe on the one side, she immediately finds besetting her on the other side.

Of Sterling's opinions during the latter part of his life, I cannot give so full an account as during the period of our greater intimacy and sympathy. For after some painful controversial letters on the subject of Strauss, in which it did not appear that any good was likely to accrue from our prolonging the controversy, our correspondence became much less frequent; and though his love of truth and his frankness would not allow him to suppress or disguise his convictions, he did not dwell on

what he knew would so deeply distress me. Among the motives which rendered him more indulgent to Strauss, was one which is always powerful with generous minds, the discovery that he had previously been led to wrong him, in consequence of the vague and virulent abuse he had heard from others. "Strauss maintains zealously that the Old Testament idea of God was present to the mind of Jesus Christ in a fulness and clearness which it had not in the noblest of the prophets,—that this animated his whole life and character,—and that the peculiarity of thought which distinguished him from all other Jewish teachers, was that of the purely Ideal and Universal in the mind and will of God, rendering Him the God of mankind, and of all pure and righteous hearts, and not merely of one race living under a peculiar set of positive institutions. As soon as I found that Strauss did really hold this belief, and exhibit Jesus as a Jewish Socrates, it appeared to me that I had always been doing him great injustice, in supposing him to represent the holiest of men as a vulgar Rabbi or demagogue, or as a mere unknown figure, to whom a series of fantastic and tragic events had accidentally been attributed." Of course I cannot examine here how far this representation is correct;

but it shows one of the inducements which acted on Sterling's mind, and how injustice of every kind is sure to defeat itself. "In the midst of all perplexities and anxieties, (he adds,) I have an inward peace to be thankful for, which controversies do not destroy, and derived from a region which my speculative doubts do not approach. I can wish my friends no higher blessing, than that they may share in abundance, that of which a small measure consoles me under all troubles." Again: "I think that you attribute to Strauss a moral and religious deadness, which I do not perceive, though he is evidently not capable, by his constitution, of devotional warmth. One of the points that most surprised me in him, after the accounts that I had heard, was his assertion of the ethical greatness and divine wisdom of Jesus; and I should be very sorry if men of distinct historical faith were ever uncandid enough to confound him with the materialist, empirical infidels, to whom all claim of anything more than brutal for man appears as a fraud or a dream. —What the ultimate results of such enquiries will be, I dare not predict to others, or to myself: but I rest my soul on the unwavering conviction that God is at once Love and Wisdom, and wills no one to continue in intentional error; that through

Christ he has freed me, and many generations of millions of his children, from the dominion of selfishness in all its forms, worldly or superstitious; and that He will complete His work, not by darkening the light He gives us, but by clearing it more and more into the knowledge of all truth. According to my conviction, this searching and comprehensive criticism leaves the ideas of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the offices of the Spirit, precisely where they were. If indeed it be maintained that there is no power, however darkened and corrupted, inherent in man's reasonable constitution, of discovering divine verities, and that they must therefore be added by mere verbal accretion from without, it is plain enough that the doubt thrown on the historical authority of the New Testament would remove all certain ground for religious doctrine. But as long as this carnal extravagance,—which indeed in another way is itself fatal to religion,—is not taught, I cannot see how the questioning the greater number, or at least the more amazing, of the miracles of the Saviour at all involves the necessity for denying him to have been spiritually the Son of God, and historically the Jewish Messiah; and it obviously no way interferes with the doctrine that the Divine

Being is essentially Triune, or with the amplest assertion of the honours and prerogatives of the Holy Spirit. All these are matters which, as it appears to me, remain for separate examination; in which process any one at all agreeing with the recent historical criticism would refuse an unconditional, but might well yield a very large and presumptive assent to the declarations of the apostles, and of the doctors and synods of the Church in all ages." I cite this passage as showing the light in which Sterling regarded Strauss; but, though in ordinary cases I deem it inconsistent with my office to point out what appears to me erroneous in his opinions, and thus to carry on a running controversy with him, it seems right to state here, that, even if the total incompatibility of Strauss's critical views with the reception of the great doctrines just spoken of were not manifest, as I think it plainly is, on the face of his *Life of Jesus*, the publication of his *Christliche Glaubenslehre* has since shown that the same criticism, which eats away all the facts of Christianity, must, by an inevitable consequence, undermine, and in course of time swallow up all its essential doctrines, which are inextricably interwoven with its facts, and of which we cannot recognise the reality and necessity except in connexion therewith.

To some readers it may be surprising to read the following extract from a letter written at the same time with those from which I have taken the foregoing passages. "I read last night a small volume by W. Huntington, S.S., called *Heaven taken by Prayer*. Seldom have I been more astonished, all my impressions of him having been derived from a dimly remembered, and most scurrilous and coxcombical article (unless I do it great injustice) of Southey's in *the Quarterly Review*, and from an anecdote quoted out of Matthews the comedian's life, which on such authority I do not credit. This little book shows him as the worthy compeer of Bunyan; and there is hardly any one in history, whose sincerity I could less easily doubt. His narrative is one of the most deeply affecting and heart-seizing I ever saw; and he seems to me to have been a Cobbett with a conscience. In that additional idea by the way what a world of difference lies! The book would have charmed Coleridge, the fourth volume of whose *Literary Remains* I have just looked through. Fervour and truthfulness of heart are deeply marked in them, as well as insight and speculative genius. But it is plain enough that he knew there were not a hundred people in England who would give a rush for the orthodoxy,

however self-assured, which rejected as much of the Scriptures and the Apostles' Creed as did not square with the conclusions of the sanctified Reason. And yet he had not courage to incur the consequences of claiming, with one stride, the right to stand upon his own faith, and not upon other men's traditions."

On the state of the Church he wrote: "The Church of England seems now far more likely than ever before, to get a working parochial organization for Church and school. In the meantime the gulf between the knowledge of the clergy and the best lights of the age seems wider than ever, and cannot, I fear, be closed. The moment reflection begins at the Universities, and tends to become systematic, extensive heterodoxy will, I think, be inevitable, and will not be able to reconcile itself, either with the stiff parliamentary formulas, or with that popular evangelical dogmatism, which is almost the only living form of religion among the mass of the nation. The Bible, so far as it is generally believed, is the Koran of England; and the first result of awakened religious reflection is to prove that this is precisely what the Bible neither is, nor pretends to be, nor can, without ghastly superstition, be taken for. How these contradictions will end I cannot tell;

but that they have begun, and cannot readily be stopped, is evident to any quiet bystander."

During the summer of 1839 at Clifton, Sterling became acquainted with Mr. Francis Newman, the present Professor of Latin at the London University College, who soon became one of his most highly valued friends, and his esteem for whom he proved by leaving his eldest son under his guardianship.

At Clifton he began to project his tragedy on *Strafford.* In October 1839 he wrote: "I have read most of Strafford's letters for the sake of a task I have in my head; and they have greatly raised my opinion of his abilities and character. He seems to me to have been among the greatest of administrators, and one of the most energetic, complete, and truly impressive characters in our history. I have been scribbling some ethical fragments, more to clear my own thoughts, than for any other purpose. I have also been making a collection of philosophical hymns, which I am calling *Hymns of a Hermit,* and sending to Blackwood. I am not concerning myself at this moment in theological matters, except quite philosophically, with regard to the idea of God and of the Will. I rest by no means in contented certainty, but in the persuasion that much, on

which I was once positive, is, and must remain doubtful, and that nevertheless there is enough of distinct and ascertained truth, to form the substance of energetic lives and systematic thoughts. The regularity of my pursuits, and the full employment of my time keep me cheerful and contented; and I know that the kind of work I do is that for which I am most fit, while it holds out the hope that I may be of some use to others."

The improvement in his health, which he seemed to have derived from his winter in Italy, was however very transient. Even in September he wrote: "I have been constantly unwell, though not very ill, and have no doubt that I shall suffer always from ulcerated lungs, and probably be freed by this malady both from itself and all other earthly evils. How soon, is another question, on which I know nothing. As the only service that I can, by anticipation, render to my children, I have begun to write an account of my life, in which I hope, by a clear display of the faults I have committed, and the better influences to which I have been subjected, to help them, when they are of years for reflection, in the task of relying on something above themselves, and in following this, not only zealously, but without the spurious humility of contented ignorance and pre-

judice. It also lies very near my heart that they should one day know how favoured I have been in my friends, and to set before them, as far as words can do it, examples which they may very possibly not find around them in actual life. But I have much to speak of which will require great nicety in the handling; and though on my own account I could even dare to tell whatever is worst of myself, it would not be the way to benefit those for whom I wish to write." These memoirs he afterwards destroyed, along with his other papers; and hardly anything remains of them, except the few anecdotes of his childhood related above.

About this time he began to print a collection of his poems, which, in token of our long friendship, he dedicated to me. While so engaged, in the latter part of November, 1839, he burst a blood-vessel; and his life seemed for a time to hang by a thread. However he regained some degree of strength, and went in the following January to Falmouth, with the purpose of sailing by the next ship to Madeira. Thence he wrote: "I am truly glad and thankful that you are pleased with my offering, which is more than I dared hope. It was printed in the midst of my illness; and correcting the press was a weary labour to me; nor did I know what to do about

the little appendages, Preface, Dedication,-&c.; and they ran in my head, till, in despair, I wrote down what seemed to burn my fingers while I traced the letters. I have tried to mend a multitude of lines and expressions, but still see much to be done that I hope to do hereafter, and much more that I despair of being able to correct. Of all my own contemporary friends, I am not aware that there is one who thinks me entitled to write verses, except Trench; and I know there is a great presumption in favour of their judgement. But I turn so spontaneously and joyously to this mode of expression, that I am loth to relinquish it. Carlyle writes to me that he likes the Hymns, which is a great deal for him to say of any verses of mine. His *Chartism*, full as it is of inconsistencies and fallacies, has yet, besides his usual merits, one to me very striking peculiarity. All the phrases about the ultimate coincidence of Right and Might, and everything touching on the ground of Ethics, is here, for the first time in his works, so guarded and explained, as to present not the slightest apparent sanction of immorality. This change has given me more pleasure than anything I remember to have noticed in a book for this long time past. I had the other day a very beautiful and most cordially affectionate letter from him."

The packet which was to convey Sterling to Madeira, brought Dr. Calvert to Falmouth; and after considerable deliberation it was resolved that the two friends should stay where they were. At Falmouth he became acquainted with the family of the Foxes, with whom he lived on the most intimate terms during the rest of his life. For some time he had also the pleasure of seeing Mr. John Mill there, one of the friends whom for many years he had most loved and esteemed and admired. In the month of March he wrote: "I have to spend my days in walking about, maundering after some geological trivialities, and have three or four hours only in the twenty-four for reading, writing, and correspondence.—I have been reading a volume of poems by Hartley Coleridge, which seem to me beautiful. The sonnets seem to stand in the same relation to Shakspere's, that the best of Wordsworth's do to Milton's.—In the half-hours I can give to any work but caring for my health, I have written a good many verses on small matters, and a series of short Essays, each perhaps twice the average length of Bacon's, on important matters,—marriage, education, duty, books, religion, &c., which, I hope, when corrected and rewritten, may be of some use in helping people to think more connectedly and

trustfully than they now do, on points on which we famous and sensible English are rather accustomed to take for granted, what the devil indeed would be ready enough to grant, but Nature and Reason, and therefore God, sturdily deny. My present position, and the kind of life I am driven to, prevent any progress of the larger undertakings, which I think of with many vain regrets. But it is a blessing to be even as well as I am, and able to do anything.—As far as I know, my volume of Poems has excited no interest whatever; and I must think of begging your pardon for having put your name into a bottle, and thrown it into Lethe, after the fashion of too sanguine voyagers. Of course three months are a very short trial; but I have myself such real distrust of any merit in the book, justifying its publication, that I am ready enough to imitate poor Charles Lamb's hiss at his own farce. I have been looking over the two volumes of his Letters; and I am disposed to consider them the pleasantest in the language, not excepting the best of Cowper's, nor, of course, Horace Walpole's. He was a man of true genius, though on a small scale, as a spangle may be gold as pure as a doubloon. I cannot describe the feeling of the ludicrous which came over me just now, on find-

ing a passage where he talks of Adam grudging a penny for nonpareils at a stall in Mesopotamia, when remembering the unpurchased plenty of his former orchard.—I have sometimes thought it would be a good thing, if a College, like that at Durham, could be established at Exeter, to diffuse a little knowledge and activity in the West. I suppose the Bishop could get it done by a word addressed to the Clergy and Tory gentry. There is a very general interest here in the natural sciences among the upper and middle classes; and the lower, I fancy, are much better behaved and taught than the average of those in England. This town and immediate neighbourhood, which are all I know of Cornwall, present a curious contrast in the look of the people to the central parts of the kingdom. They are much more like the French, with small heads, and compact features, and dark eyes. I hear that they spend much more of their money on clothes, and less on food, than is usual in England, which, I have been told, is also the case in Scotland. The high wages of mining, and the abundance of cheap fish, tend much to better their condition."

In the beginning of April, 1840, Sterling returned to Clifton, where he had been forced to leave his family. Here he wrote: "The delight

of finding my children well, improved, merry, and affectionate, is one that you can understand; and on the whole I have much reason to be thankful for the state of my peculiar world, though with some reasons for anxiety, and especially with abundant threatenings of uncertainty in my own life, which I am now as much disposed to overvalue, as I was for many years inclined to underrate it and be careless of it. I am still in great confusion here, my books and papers being as tangled a wreck as the speculative doctrines of my clear country in our age. With me indeed the disorder is settling into some shape, though the waste of my day in walking about leaves me little time for any kind of work, and less of that hope which alone makes work delightful. I trust however, I may by and by begin again to write some Essays, of which I did a dozen or more at Falmouth. I do not know that I am fit for anything better; but I am certain of doing some good by shewing the absence of all coherence and life in the prevalent English notions, and my own faith in the possibility of deep and systematic knowledge on the laws and first principles of our existence. I am very glad you can find any satisfaction in the Poems. To me they have never been very joyous, and are now almost entirely

distasteful. When I think of *Christabel* and *Hermann and Dorothea*, I feel a strong persuasion that I deserve the pillory for ever writing verses at all. The writings of Schelling, Fichte, and some others, give me the same uneasy belief as to prose; and I only work myself up to do anything, from the faith that after all I must have been meant for some use, and that, if I cannot write well, I am at all events unable to do anything else better. You will not think this affectation, but may perhaps consider it morbid egotism; so I will talk of pleasanter things. I received yesterday from Cambridge a sumptuously printed poem, *the Song of the Sirens.* There is decided meaning, and much rhythmic eloquence in the thing; but it does not satisfy me. My taste for controversial poetry is, I fear, extremely latent, if not feeble; nor could I heartily sympathize with a writer of prose, who saw and exposed the inadequacy of Carlyle's views, without seeing, or at least without owning, the two propositions, or either of them, which in my mind are the clearest and most comprehensive on the spiritual state of England in our day; first, that our appointed guides have, as a class, and historically speaking, done their work intolerably ill, and much worse than those of any other Protestant country; and secondly,

that the time is past, when the realization of our old Church institutions and Reformation theology would have satisfied the best minds, a reconstructive revolution in thought being inevitable, which will destroy much still held sacred among us, and will readjust all to the one great modern principle of the self-conscious and Christianly sanctified Reason. I wish good speed to every attempt at fulfilling any long neglected ideal of goodness; but I am satisfied of nothing more entirely, than of the necessity for a great crisis in the belief of England, which will indeed destroy Socialism and Sectarianism, but will just as certainly shake off the Thirty-nine Articles. I write plainly to you; but pray believe that I am far from thinking it right to blaze up suddenly in the face of a nation's creed and customs. Nothing but reverence for Truth should exceed our reverence for all objects of men's living faith; and I am most anxious to be preserved from a spirit of intemperate blame, or of mocking levity. If I saw any hope that Maurice and Samuel Wilberforce and their fellows could reorganize and reanimate the Church and nation, or that their own minds could continue progressive without becoming revolutionary, I think I could willingly wrap my head in my cloak, or lay it in the

grave, without a word of protest against aught that is. But I am well assured that this cannot be; and I must do what work is given me to do, under heavier penalties for omission than I dare encounter.—Ullmann's answer to Strauss I have not seen, but have no doubt it is very good; though one of the deepest, bitterest, and most lasting disappointments of my life was, what I think, his failure in the Essay *über die Unsündlichkeit Jesu*. I shall never forget, but, I hope, never again experience the dismay with which I reviewed his enquiry, and was compelled to say he had not made good his point. I have now healed this large and woful wound in quite another way than Ullmann's; and I cannot regret my experience, though I would not willingly endure the like again."

In the following June he wrote: "My life is stagnant and altogether unproductive; but my health gains by idleness; and I must be content to dream of the future, instead of living now, and reap visionary harvests, for which I am neither ploughing nor sowing, and which must therefore probably end in vision. My inward story, so far as there is one, has been verging more and more to the exercise of imagination in the free, sympathetic, and earnest study of human life; and I

vaguely deliberate on plans of works of fiction more than on any other sort of literary enterprise. German philosophy stands afar in the background, a cloudy, but also starry temple, hallowed to the same God worshipped by mankind in so many tents, dens, barns, and minsters. The idleness which is necessary for health, prevents my studying the books I should most like to read; and I take up only those which can be mastered without much continuous reflection. Of these flying leaves, few have lately pleased me better than a pamphlet of Arnold's on Prophecy, worth, I suspect, all else on the subject in the English language, pointing out a principle, and leading on to more truth than it declares.—I find everywhere ears and hearts open to any thoughtful and sincere word, only how few to speak such language! I would give much to have any of my older and deeper friends near me, were that possible. Meanwhile there is much kindness, practical honesty and good sense, in many round me; though reflection and faith in a spirit beyond the letter are looked on with more suspicion than a cage of serpents, or a bale of cotton fresh from a city of the plague.—I have had a most cordial letter from Emerson, thanking me for my Poems. They must improve much in a voyage over the

Atlantic; for he writes of them in a way quite unlike any other eulogies that have reached me. Carlyle I have not heard from lately, but see many proofs that he is gradually doing his work, and convincing men's hearts that no belief can be adopted as useful, unless embraced as true, without being far worse than useless; a brief proposition of most revolutionary import in a day like ours.—I will copy here some of the last words of James Naylor the quaker, which express what I at present regard as the eternal truth embodied in Christianity. 'There is a spirit which I feel, that delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations. As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other. If it be betrayed, it bears it; for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness; its life is everlasting love unfeigned, and takes its kingdom with entreaty, and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it, or can own its life. It is conceived in

sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it; nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings; for with the world's joy it is murdered. I found it alone, being forsaken. I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth, who through death obtained this resurrection and eternal holy life.'"

In September he gave the following account of his occupations. "I continue to feel more interest in poetical composition than in any other pursuit, and have been reading chiefly Goethe and Schiller, with an increasing conviction that, however far from them, it is in their course I must travel. Yet how strange it seems that, except Wordsworth, now at the limit of human life, there is not one man in England who has strenuously devoted himself to imaginative literature, as a serious and noble art, requiring as much labour and severity as theology or politics! Carlyle is the only man I know of (unless M.) under sixty, who has shown himself the possessor of transcendent genius; and in him it all serves the purpose of moral and political exhortation, like that of the old Hebrew prophets. The barrenness and darkness of our actual English world, so far as ideals are concerned, strikes me, I think, more and

more; and I escape with inexpressible delight into the fruitful and sunny region of poetry, and especially into Goethe's realm of art. In reading his letters what most delights me is the overflowing fulness of affection. No one who has read them can suspect him of selfish coldness; and yet I see from Strauss's admirable *Streitschriften*, that the blustering booby Menzel does so. I used to think it probably true, but had then never read the letters.—I have read Heine's poems, and with very great enjoyment. Poor fellow! I hear he has so wearied out his better genius, that for years he has been unable to write a verse. Have you seen the two volumes of Shelley's prose? a sad specimen of book-making and reader-swindling, but still containing beautiful things. He seems half mad about Christianity. Conceive his thinking it a mere and very calamitous accident in the history of the world, and lamenting that the progress of Greek culture was stopped first by the Roman conquests and then by this Jewish superstition. I suppose, no educated German would have been capable of such absurdity. It is pleasant however to find that he had come quite to see through the French sensationist infidels; and there are innumerable traits of kindness and truthfulness in the letters. With all my admira-

tion of his genius, the want of real human nature in his poetry makes it very unsatisfying; and it is remarkable that he never seems to have suspected anything wrong in his own choice of so monstrous a theme as that of the Cenci. With all his faults, he was a generous, heroic being; and his riper mind would have furnished such light as English poetry has not now, whatever it may once have had. I have been able just to glance through Sewell's Article on Carlyle. All his dissertations that I have seen, and eminently this, are like handsome buildings with floors of glass, through which one looks and sees that there is no foundation to the walls. He is made of words, and nothing more. Imagine a man pretending to survey the world, and all its wisest men, and to reconstruct his age, and writing down, as he does in his *Ethics*, that external historical testimony of God's revealed will is the only true basis of moral science. As if all science is not within, and all morality! and as if anything external could be the basis of anything within!—One can hardly conceive how so quick and sharp an advocate fails to perceive that his doctrine of unlimited obedience and docility serves just as well for a Calvinist, or Unitarian, nay, for a Brahmin or a Bonze, as for an Oxford High Churchman, and therefore can be of no use to any

of them. Take this assumption away; and what has the Truth, according to Sewell, to rest upon? At his weapons the Romanist is sure to reap the final fruits of all these Anglican victories. Francis Newman, who alone of my friends here has spent his life in reflection and study, is just gone; and it will be long before I find his match.—Tieck, I hear, says that he likes Carlyle's writings, but complains that they are so *ganz Englisch;* while all England protests against them as *ganz Deutsch*: the gold and silver shield once more."

About the same time he wrote to another friend. "I have done little lately but read Goethe, in whom there is endless pleasure and profit: and the beauty of whose character, his steadfast sense of duty, and warm and noble affections, have never seemed to me half so plain, as now that I have read more than a thousand of his letters, as well as many of his works that I did not know before. The task he and others, but he chiefly, performed so thoroughly for Germany, still remains to be seriously begun for England."

The early part of the ensuing winter he spent at Torquay, the latter part at Penzance. Writing from the former place, he gave the following account of his convictions: "the universal and eternal truth of the Gospel is that view of the

relations of men to God, and to each other, which presents itself as true to the heart, conscience, and reason, when purified by Christian influences; which influences are obtained by the meditation on, and sympathy with, the life and mind of Christ recorded in Scripture, and by the teaching and example of other believers in Him. On this view, Christian truth is that, and only that, doctrine which commends itself to the minds of all who share in the spirit of Christ; which spirit may be briefly described as a prevailing temper of reverential and affectionate self-denial. Taking all ages and countries through, this essential doctrine will be found to resolve itself into the acknowledgement of Christ as the Ideal Man, and therefore the representative of the Divine Mind towards us."

Speaking at the same time about our Church, he said: "One remark has grown into my mind with deeper and deeper conviction for many years, viz., that all the other means of animating the lower, including the middle classes, with interest in the Church, are almost trivial, until you begin by organizing congregations, that is, bodies of communicants, feeling themselves linked together by common duties and rights, and exercising their congregational privileges as inseparable from

their Christian character, and of course excluding those who manifestly violate the Christian covenant in essentials. Nothing, I am sure, that can be done among the Clergy, or to their flocks,—much as is needed in both respects,—has near the importance of this great change; the want of which makes the Church more fatally helpless than, I imagine, any other Protestant body in the world.—I have read a great deal of Trench's book on the Parables, and like it. His main rule of interpretation however, I am persuaded, is wrong, viz., to make every part of the imagery of the Parables spiritually significant, that can by any means be so treated. My belief is, that the main point in each is the only one perfectly expressed, and that all the rest is merely subordinate and external."

His chief occupation this winter was his tragedy of *Strafford*. In January, 1841, he said: "I am writing a tragedy, which interests and occupies me, I think, more than anything I ever attempted." Again, four days after: "I have just written the three first acts of a tragedy, and hope soon to do the rest; but it will all have to be rewritten much more slowly. I never was in water where I swam so lightly; and I shall be very curious for the censures of my friends, when the

time comes." In the following August he wrote: "My health has been but feeble; and till a month ago I did not even attempt any regular mental employment. Since then I have been busy with my tragedy on Strafford, which I wrote the first draft of in the winter, and which, when written over a third time, will perhaps interest the few readers of poetry we still have left among us. It has cost me far more trouble than anything else I ever attempted, and is laid by for the present, that it may be looked at with fresh eyes.—Of other people's writings I have seen very lately nothing that has much interested me, but Emerson's Essays. They are sometimes self-contradictory, and often push detached truths into paradox; but they have much of depth, of comprehensiveness, and of beauty, and express what at this time many minds among us require, and yet will hardly find in English." In October he wrote: "During the last few days I have read through *Wilhelm Meister*, which I never before read in German, and never at all since I was in the West Indies. Up to that time it had been one of the three or four books that had most influenced me. I have gone through it now with indescribable pleasure, and see clearly how much there is to be set against even those

parts which formerly most offended me. The indecorums unfit it for young women; but its moral tendency I cannot but revere; while the clear and full beauty must be felt and loved, not talked about. On the whole, as I have been saying, the book is, more than any other, the gospel of Experience, certainly not completely, transparently poetic, and even in its didactic purpose, sometimes trivial and perverse, but with more knowledge of human life, wants, and necessities, than can anywhere else be found. Goethe's works are, on the whole, the only world except the real one, in which it is possible for a man of our age truly to live. One may exist in others; and so does a mummy in its case.—I have also just been reading the portion as yet published of K. O. Müller's admirable history of Greek literature, and have been specially pleased by his account of Thucydides, and of the distinction between him and Herodotus. Müller is to me the most delightful writer on classical subjcets I have ever looked into. All his archeology is alive and human.—I have just put together a lot of miscellaneous poems, near twenty, not so good on the whole as those in my volume,—the corrected *Hymns of a Hermit*, and all the *Thoughts in Rhyme*,—in three divisions, meditative, satirical,

and lyrical. The whole would be a volume about the size of the last; but I cannot afford to print them myself, and may probably send them to America, where Emerson would arrange the publication. I send you the manuscript of my *Strafford.* I hardly dare hope you will like it; but no adverse judgement can mislead me as to the amount of reflection I have put in it, and the knowledge it has procured me."

To the observations which I sent him on his tragedy, he replied: "It would take a great deal of public applause at all to match the pleasure which your letter has given me. I never had ventured to hope that you could feel so much approbation of my work. It had interested me deeply, and cost me much trouble; and there is a class of readers, and especially of critics, of the Charles Lamb school, who, it seemed likely, would be gratified by it. But there appeared very much in it that might grievously offend both the deeply religious and the classically cultivated. Seldom has life afforded me a livelier surprise or a more cordial pleasure than that of opening your letter. On the two largest questions, perhaps we may come to agree more than we seem to do now. You can hardly dislike more than I, any mere accident in a tragic catastrophe; but my conception

of the thing was this: that Strafford attempted to construct and manage a grand, magnanimous despotism in a country affording no materials for any manly, noble system, but that of Parliamentary Government. He had everything honest and energetic in the nation against him; and, till after his death, it stood as one man against the Court. Hence his only allies were the utterly worthless, persons who were sure to fail and betray him in the hour of need. This was no accident, but the very essence of the matter at issue. The tragic interest consists in the fact, that nevertheless he was a truly great man, or might be so represented, and, when his cause was irretrievably gone, as it deserved, stood out all the more striking and coherent figure from the ruin around him. The other great point is that of his character. Why was he so odious to the nation? You compare Coriolanus: but observe the difference. It was chiefly the Roman's personal arrogance, that made him intolerable. Strafford too was overhaughty; but his crime was in his cause, in the despotism which he supported, and which I have made him confess was his great object. The whole play bubbles, I hope, and flames with the universal zeal of England for a Parliamentary Government, which had in fact not one plausible

and strong opponent, except Wentworth. As to his complaint of Charles' ingratitude, we have no record of it, because we have hardly any notices of him from his intimate friends. In intercourse with them, entire silence on the subject would, I think, have been affectation. The rest are minor points; and on several of them I have followed your hints. I still cannot see that I have done Laud any injustice, and do not understand how the man who cut off Prynne's ears, and forced a surplice on Scotland at the point of the sword, can fairly be called a sincere lover of peace. I did the best for him I could, in making him express vigorously the principle which lay at the root of all his ecclesiastical doings, which I do not think, nor have represented as a mere absurdity. Hampden and Pym, no doubt, would not themselves have dealt with the mob as I represent: but that they would and must have employed others to do so, the history of all popular revolutions seems to me to prove. It served my purpose better to make them work directly."

Returning to the same subject in a subsequent letter, he added: "My estimate of Strafford's real character was formed from a careful study of the two folios of his letters. He was, in fact, a far less generous man than I have represented him;

and I find much difficulty in believing that he meant to be taken at his word in writing his well-known letter to the King. But, however this may be, he was essentially a man of the Alva, Wallenstein and Napoleon, the Marius and Cæsar stamp. Restless energy, clear sagacity, obstinate volition, and boundless love of power, are the obvious traits of the whole class. In such men it appears to me that Christianity, or, in other words, self-annihilating piety, can have no large and consistent place; and it is clear from his correspondence that, though no doubt in some sense a believer, religious feeling had no hold on him at all. No doubt, as you say, there is a great difficulty in presenting it at all in a drama; but, besides this, to have brought it forward vividly in any of the other characters would have spoilt my poem, by introducing a second and incongruous interest. My object was to exhibit a man preserving his personal strength and completeness in the most disastrous circumstances, and against the most fearful odds; and I found such a character in the last very eminent English public man who met a truly tragic end. For the sake of this, to my feelings, grand and elevating picture, I put up with the objection that I all along felt to the absence of personal counterforces

and visible facts, in the merely general political nature of the causes that produced Strafford's overthrow. It could have been evaded only by introducing and giving prominence to one or more merely personal enemies of Strafford, as some one whose wife or sister he had seduced, or some Irishman whom he had stript of his estates; but for more than one reason I found this inexpedient.—The monotony of the versification is, I fear, in this work irremediable. It is more after the pattern of Schiller and Goethe, than of Shakspere. But I was obliged to write as well as I could from my own ear and feeling; and the result for good and evil was hardly calculated beforehand.—Lately I have been reading again some of Alfred Tennyson's second volume, and with profound admiration of his truly lyric and idyllic genius. There seems to me to have been more epic power in Keats, that fiery beautiful meteor; but they are two most true and great poets. When one thinks of the amount of recognition they have received, one may well bless God that poetry is in itself strength and joy, whether it be crowned by all mankind, or left alone in its own magic hermitage. It is true, no doubt, that what new poetry we have is little cared for; but also true that there is wonderfully

little deserving any honour. Compare our present state with twenty years ago, when Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, and Scott, the novelist, were all vigorously productive. Carlyle is the one great star that has arisen since; and he is far more prophet than singer."

Finding himself perpetually driven to the southern coast, Sterling removed with his family in the summer of 1841 from Clifton to Falmouth His health was manifestly declining; sharp attacks of illness became more frequent, and left their traces behind in continually increasing weakness. Yet still the vigour of his mind held out, and enabled him to do much, notwithstanding the feebleness of his body; and he joyfully embraced every opportunity of benefiting those among whom he dwelt. Of his life at Falmouth I have received the following account from one who knew him there intimately. "He used to rise as early as five o'clock, to read and write in his little study, overlooking the sea, spent much of the mornings in long rides and walks, in the keenest enjoyment of the life and beauty around him, and returned to an early dinner with his children, entering into all their amusements, as if he were one of them. Christmas eve was always a gala day, when the task of

ornamenting and illuminating the Christmas tree devolved principally on him. His sympathies were ever ready for small as well as great things; and the feelings of a child he always treated with respect. In the evenings he would often invite a few friends to join their happy little family party. We looked over his portfolios of German and Italian engravings, listening to his reminiscences of Italy, or to his sparkling thoughts on the great men whose portraits lay before us, or to his criticisms on the works and minds of the great artists. Sometimes these evenings were devoted to the reading of manuscript poetry,—sometimes to Wordsworth, his comments on whom were invaluable, full of light and love,—sometimes to an essay on Dante; but always to something that might help the young forward, whom he wished to regard him as an elder brother, ever ready to assist them in their difficulties, to give them faithful advice, and to exercise his many gifts as talents entrusted to him for their benefit."

I have already spoken of his peculiar faculty of eliciting dormant powers in those with whom he was brought into contact, and have said that many owe the awakening of their moral being to him. As an instance of his painstaking kind-

ness to the young, and of the wisdom with which he endeavoured to direct their studies toward the noblest aims, I will here insert a series of extracts from some letters to a friend, in whose education he took a warm interest, and who says of them that "they did him more good than he can well express." The first was written to him when a pupil at King's College, London. "I am very glad to hear your account of what you are doing, which seems all very well, except the mathematics. I fear you run some chance of losing your time by attempting what is beyond your strength, if you meddle as yet with the differential calculus. Unless you perfectly understand and feel quite familiar with all the previous steps, the study of such a subject is a mere waste of labour.—I have myself wasted years of my life, by hurrying to things which were beyond my capacity, and would gladly save you from the same misfortune. I am now laboriously endeavouring, with my mere odds and ends of leisure, to learn things in mathematics, which I ought to have known twelve years ago. But then I have the satisfaction of feeling that every half hour I so employ, now gives me some real knowledge. As to your classical studies, I suppose you could not do better than you are now doing. On the

whole my chief fear as to the system in general is, that it may perhaps distract your mind with too great a variety of studies. The subjects especially on which the Principal lectures, are likely to be beyond the powers of a great many of his pupils; and on the Evidences of Christianity, as on all other enquiries, superficial knowledge rather injures than improves the mind. The best course I think that you can follow, is to employ all your strength in thoroughly mastering the elementary parts of your studies, and for this purpose to sacrifice, if it be necessary, the chance of prizes and present applause. If you so fix your attention as to seize strong hold of the first principles of mathematics, and of Greek grammar, you will facilitate all your after studies, and be gaining mental power, though you may be losing prizes. You say nothing of composition in Greek and Latin, which is, I believe, the greatest help to accurate knowledge, and is considered at the Universities as the surest test of it. As you are reading Herodotus, I may mention that Talboys of Oxford published some years ago a translation of a little essay of Niebuhr's on his Geography, which you would do well to read. Always remember, in reading Herodotus, that, though he wished to tell the truth, the stories which he

heard from others, for instance from the Egyptian priests, are often mere lies. I believe, the guiding idea of his book is the difference in the mind of a Greek between Greece and all barbarous countries, that is, all others than Greece. You hardly find the germs of this in Homer: it is strongly presented in Herodotus; much more so, I fancy, in Æschylus; and this principle was finally realized and proved to be no dream of national vanity in the wars of the younger Cyrus and of Alexander the Great. As you are reading Greek plays, you should try to borrow the translation of Schlegel on Dramatic Literature, and read what he says of the ancient drama. He is perhaps rather unfair to Euripides."

The next extracts are from letters written to Oxford. "As to the spirit in which your reading is to be carried on, you will have the best advice from your present Lecturer. I can only repeat, what I am sure you will have gathered from him, in earnestly urging you not to propose to yourself any outward or temporary object, as your highest end, but to regard every subordinate purpose as serious and worthy only in so far as you may render it conducive to the cultivation of the Intelligence, Conscience, and pure Affections, which are the spiritual and permanent portions of

our Being. Knowledge itself and mental power, dignified and of good report as these are, when compared with passive indolence, or with the activity of the passions and sensations, yet, if separated from the perpetual companionship of the reasonable affections and the moral will, and from the idea of that highest Reason and Love, to whom we owe ourselves not in part, but wholly, may be but the instruments of a less curable, and more painful, and infinitely more mischievous corruption. Study therefore with a constant reference to the reasonable and noble uses of study, remembering that the enjoyments of the intellect, much less its worldly dignities and profits, are not the reasons of our having it; and therefore study deliberately, steadily, severely, conscientiously. But you must not suppose that I think a student of your years can possibly be the fittest judge of the direction and extent of his labours. You are in the hands of a system, and of teachers, who are indeed imperfect, but are nevertheless far more likely to be right than you can be imagined to be; and even if you were tempted to strike out a path for yourself, and by some sport of accident hit upon a better than that in which you are directed, the moral loss would probably be far greater than the intellec-

tual gain,—the loss of humility, of quiet, of self-distrust, of teachableness, no less the peculiar Graces, or Charities of the student, than zeal for knowledge, sympathy with the wise, the austere devotion to truth and right, are the Muses appointed to inspire him. Beware also of desultory reading, and especially of modern works of entertainment. Periodicals and novels are to all in this generation, but more especially to those whose minds are still unformed, and in the process of formation, a new and more effectual substitute for the plagues of Egypt, vermin that corrupt the wholesome waters, and infest our chambers. That they do not excite invincible disgust, but are rather armed with potent attraction, is but an aggravation of the evil. An older work, even of mere fancy, always must address itself in us to something better than the vulgar, drowsy sense of custom, and blind, unconscious habit. Its differences from our own thoughts and age will necessarily excite to reflection. But moreover of older books one naturally takes up the best; and even for relaxation, if I may judge for myself, you will find a canto of Spenser, or a book of Milton, at least as lively a cordial as a volume of Bulwer, or an article in the *Quarterly Review*. And what a difference in

the after flavour! I will add my opinion that, if admission to a debating society came in your way, I should rather prefer to hear of your declining it. I should even have some doubt as to the smaller circles in which essays are read, and literary questions debated. But on this latter point you must of course decide, chiefly with reference to your own amount of leisure, and to the kind of companions you would be associated with. Above all and in all things, however, even the smallest, endeavour to act on reflection, and with an eye to a principle. Avoid carefully flippancy, gossip, loss of time in talk. Cultivate at the bottom of your heart a spirit of piety, benevolence, and purity: and do not keep these for the great occasions, and what are called the serious affairs of life; but let the sunny presence of reason and religion in you be like that of the sun itself, which, while it lights up the great regions of nature, sends the same radiance even through chinks and keyholes."

The next letter was written to the same friend, after he had been unsuccessful in an examination. "I was by no means so unhappy as you seem to wish me to be, at your failure to obtain the scholarship. Indeed that seemed to me a less important matter than your anxiety on the subject, which will probably be a far greater advantage to

you from the exertions it will induce you to make, than any preferment could be. I confess I should even wish you to moderate your earnestness, not of study, but of zeal for the rewards of study; as these, though very good, and even necessary in their way, are much less interesting and valuable than the knowledge you will get by the way; and it is a pity your ambition, which seems to run in so full a stream, should confine itself to the small object, and think comparatively nothing of the great one. I have no doubt that in time you will get your share of the honours and emoluments of the University; but I venture to add my anxious wish that you may always remember such things, could they be piled up like Pelion on Ossa, will still at most be means, not ends. You wrote to me about reading logic; and I was glad to learn that you liked it. There is, I believe, no good book on the subject read at Oxford, except the earliest of all. It would be worth your while to examine an article on the subject, I think a review of Whately, which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* some five years ago. It is, I believe, by Sir W. Hamilton of Edinburgh, who knows more of the matter than any one that ever wrote on it in our language. If you cared to go further, the best book is a small volume in

German by Twesten. In reading logic, which is of course a very elementary part of metaphysics, you have at least this advantage, that the science in its main outlines is indisputably established, and indeed has been so ever since Aristotle. For the sceptical attacks on him as to this study are mere blunders about his object, supposing this to be the proposal of some new instrument of discovery, and not the mere analysis of a simple act of reasoning. Synthetics are a far more difficult and extensive enquiry than analytics, but not, I suppose, so much attended to in your schools. I should like to hear more than you told me of your studies in general, what books you had been reading, and what you thought of them. But you must not let your first thoughts about books stifle the subsequent ones. It sometimes happens that one takes up a notion about the main purpose or general character of an author, and then bends and cuts up everything one meets with in him to suit this preliminary view. But in guarding against this error, and keeping the mind open to new impressions, it is nevertheless better to start with some conception, of course a very malleable and ductile one, of what we are to meet, as we have thus an interest in going on warily and vigorously, so as to find grounds for and against

our anticipation. The worst way of all is the utterly lifeless, stupid, and acquiescing one, such as that of the somnambulists, who walk about with their eyes open, read and talk, and then of a sudden wake, and know not a jot of what they have been doing. But many are somnambulists all their lives, and in fact only cheat their neighbours by affecting to be better than mummies, or than suits of clothes hung upon electric wires. Therefore toil, feel, think, hope. A man is sure to dream enough before he dies, without making arrangements for the purpose."

The next letter contains some sound advice with regard to abstinence from the theological controversies then raging at Oxford. "Your account of your studies is very satisfactory. I suppose there is no doubt of the corruptness of the Poetics; and there is certainly none as to the elevation and depth of Sophocles, whom I am very happy to find that you appreciate. A true and pure feeling for poetry is not, I think, nearly so common as ordinary conversation might lead us to suppose; and it is closely connected with moral and intellectual qualities of the highest value, with a sense for, and preference of, the true in all things, and with a perception of the simply and severely Beautiful, which is the proper garb,

or rather body of the True, the form in and by which it becomes outwardly apparent and intelligible. People perpetually fancy that they love poetry, when that which they really like is rhythmical rhetoric, presenting, not ideal, essential, quiet truth in its appropriate medium, but only the common, the empty, and the spurious, in a vague, tawdry, noisy element of vulgarity. As to your question about the views of Pusey and Newman, I have now neither leisure nor space to give you a suitable answer. In general however, I do not believe that there is a patent given by God to any body of men, whether an episcopally ordained clergy or not, to be always right on the essentials of religion: and until this point is proved, the whole fabric is but a building hanging in the air. If it were proved, then I say we are schismatics for leaving Rome. As to this question, and all those most closely connected with it, I should advise you, if you really wish to examine the matter for yourself, to read the first volume of Neander, translated by the younger Rose. In the main I agree with the German. I do not, however, at all see the necessity for your saying that you agree with Newman, until you really have sifted the arguments on both sides. In your position and at your age, it will always be suffi-

cient for you to say that you have not yet had leisure and opportunity for studying the questions at issue. They have puzzled far older and more highly informed men; and there is surely no reason why you should dub yourself a partisan in this or any other cause, before your time. It is my firm belief, that, in spite of great talents and acquirements in the supporters of these opinions, prodigious zeal and conviction, and much moral and religious excellence, the whole thing is unsound, fantastic, arbitrary, and cannot ultimately stand.

"I do not know that I have been reading anything which I need write about to you, except Hallam's three concluding volumes of the *Introduction to Modern Literature*. It is one of the few classical books which have appeared in English in our day. Sense, acuteness, thoughtfulness, care, elegance, information, mark it throughout. There is more of cold candour, than of enthusiastic warmth, with a decided tendency to moderation and caution, verging sometimes towards indifference. The criticism on works of imagination is always excellent, though one may sometimes see ground to differ from him. The comments on the physical sciences are more a compilation, but, I suppose, very well done. It

is on philosophy and the higher theology that there is most room to dissent; though even here there are a multitude of good remarks, and some extremely neat and concise accounts of the systems of great men. I cannot feel that he is at home in this highest region of thought, or is always just to those who are. But, though somewhat narrow and not deep, he is not so fixed in one definite, small scheme, as to preclude the progress of those who regard him as their teacher, and will rather on the whole favour the advance of a philosophic spirit, by the many diversities of view which he describes, by his hostility to vulgar ignorance, and by the general tolerance and earnestness which mark his character. It is incomparably his best book, and one of the very best in recent English literature. But you must not meddle with it till you have taken your degree."

The next letter relates to a theme which had been appointed for a prize poem. "It is impossible, with any time I can now give to the matter, to suggest anything of the least value on the subject of the Judgement of Brutus. I might perhaps, were I writing about it, attempt to vary the monotonous rhetorical heaviness of such compositions, by supposing a Roman peasant to turn up with his spade, while digging in his vineyard,

a broken bas-relief, on which he should see the judgement scene set forth, and the main point made obvious by the likeness of the youths to the Consul, and by the Lictors standing near them in attitude of menace. I am not sure whether something might not be made of the contrast between the Roman Consul and the Jewish King, who would have saved his rebellious son, and who wept over the corpse of Absalom. I am sure it would be desirable to say nothing about Liberty, but to set forth Law as the constraining, justifying power, and a legal polity, whence civilization, order, and the purity and safety of that domestic life, which Brutus seemingly violated, as the great aim of all Roman patriots. Perhaps it may be said that the Roman, nay, the Greek valued his home for the sake of his country, the household for the State; while the reverse is true of modern Europe. Another curious contrast to Brutus is presented in Pericles, and his overthrow of the laws in order to legitimize his bastard son. I think they say he never wept, except at the funeral of his last child,—he whose boast it was that he had made no Athenian weep. If you want some modern contrast for Brutus, and that in a Roman, take some one of the Popes, and his efforts to aggrandize his bastards at the ex-

pense, not only of Rome as a civil state, but of the ecclesiastical polity which had Rome for its centre. Paul III., or Alexander VI., might serve your purpose, and, would furnish room for some brilliant painting on the difference between the Pagan and the Papal city. Would it be appropriate, speaking of the Judgement itself, to describe the silent horror, broken only by a wide groan of the people of Rome, and then rise to tell how the invisible powers above, who must be described with vague Miltonic grandeur, looked calmly pleased in their serene halls, prescient of the greatness which should swallow all other empires, and lead a hundred triumphs past the tomb of Brutus? This is all random talk; so take it only at what it is worth. It might be worth suggesting the distinction between such cases as that of Brutus and Manlius, and the family massacres of barbarian kings, for mere personal purposes. Rome was twice saved by parental authority, once in the case of Brutus, and again in that of Coriolnus, according to the legend, which is all you want. Other mothers must have suffered the wrongs of Lucretia, if Brutus had not shown the virtue of a Roman father, &c. &c. &c. &c. The predominant moral feeling of Rome is shown in the guilt of the sons of Brutus, while the daughter of Agamem-

non was perfectly innocent; but the perfect Roman parallel of the Greek story is that of Virginius."

After his friend had passed his examination for his degree, Sterling wrote thus:—"Of course it would have been better had you been in the first class; but it is creditable to be even in the second; and you have no doubt some powers and attainments which an examination could not test, and which are more valuable than those your judges did take measure of. The important point however is, the future, not the past. I have very little advice to give, chiefly this: do not be in a hurry to involve yourself for life in any special employment. If you can obtain pupils, you will be able to cultivate your own mind, while you are helping them, and by-and-by will be at least as fit as now to come to a final decision.—As to reckoning on literature as a means of subsistence, it is a melancholy kind of speculation, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, produces bitter disappointment. Nothing at all events could justify the scheme, except success already obtained. If you can write what shall be worth money, and have the sovereigns in your pocket, you may fairly hope to do the same thing again. But at the best, the temptation to write for the market,

and so degrade one's own feelings and character, is, when one depends on the public for bread, a temptation so strong, that only the firmest and noblest minds can long resist it. I shall be very glad to hear what you may think of writing, and, if you go on with it, to look at it before you send it forth on any venture."

A few months after, Sterling sent his friend further advice, on the cultivation of his moral being. "I was glad to have your account of yourself, and especially to find that you are neither idling nor growing narrow. Indolence is the failing of the weak; but in this country the strong, in the immense majority of cases, stunt themselves into men of mere practice, or of some pinching and mechanical kind of dogma, which they call Truth, and think it comes down ready made for them from heaven, like a hailstone. Keep your vigour and your freedom of mind both together, and at all costs. Be a cobbler all your days, rather than surrender them; nay, remember always that the only work you have to do, is to cultivate and realize these more and more, and that you are to eat and drink, and wear a shirt, only in order to this end. Our age in this country, with all its loud delusions and profound barbarisms of soul, calls groaningly for help from the few to

whom any better spark is given. But even were it otherwise, or were it hopeless that you should help others, the clearness, coherence, and life of your own existence can only be secured by unceasing efforts to do whatever is the best work that seems to lie, however distant, before you. It is hard, no doubt, to keep these things in mind, and act upon them, whilst so much distraction goes on around you, and perpetually shrieks, *Only look how peaceful and how wise I am!* But still it is possible.—The right of the State to superintend and modify all bequests for public purposes arises from this, that the possibility of such bequests is a creation of the State. Wherever men exist, they will wish to bequeathe the fruits of their labours to their children; and the universality of the wish will secure the right in each individual case. But then the property is as freely enjoyed by the heir as by his predecessor; and the privilege of restraining this right, of establishing trusts for public purposes, is the work of law, and may by law be shaped and altered at the will of the legislators. The propriety of exercising this sovereignty from time to time arises from the changing circumstances and wants of successive generations."

On his friend's becoming a tutor in a family,

Sterling wrote to him:—"As to advice, which you ask for,—positively, be useful; negatively, don't be obtrusive; and you will be sure to succeed. If you are zealous in your own peculiar duties, and careful not to step beyond them without adequate cause, any but very singular people will be sure to value you; and you will prosper accordingly. As objects more personal to yourself, you must consider the acquisition of any knowledge in your power as to the country you will be living in (Sweden), which very few persons in England know anything about. The real condition of the people will be hard to discover; but, if you remain there a year or two, you ought to bring away some accurate conception of the state of politics, of religion, of education, of literature, and even of the morals and manners of the higher classes. As to these matters, I have only two hints to offer, both obvious enough. Learn the language: read the Bible in it, and a daily newspaper, if there is such a thing: and secondly, as soon as you can, talk it to everybody you come across. You will find, I imagine, the use, or even necessity, of a more careful and formal politeness than we have time for in England. If circumstances permit, you will learn a good deal by going to the theatre. Buy books of the plays and follow

the actors. The second personal object is one not dependent on your position at Stockholm, namely, the improvement of your own mind in the higher departments. I highly approve of your design to study German philosophy, but shall not be shocked to hear you abandon it, after trial. It will however by no means be necessary, if you should thus retreat, to fall back upon any position so untenable as that of Pusey. The unlimited authority of the clergy was in the Middle Ages, as the unlimited authority of the Scriptures is generally among us now, the substitute for that reasonable and practical religion, which is both reconcilable with the best knowledge, and sufficient for the higher wants of life and action: and this may be understood and realized by myriads, to whom Schelling and Hegel are thick darkness.—Consider what seem to be the habits of the family you will be living in, as soon as you can after joining them; and leave them alone at whatever part of the day, probably after dinner, they will most like to be left to themselves. Try to gain the boys' affections by deserving it.—Do not forget to keep a journal of all the information you collect about the country you are living in. But omit gossiping stories about individuals, unless very well attested, of

very expressive; and even then try to leave out names, when possible. Be serious in your purposes without affectation; and join cheerfulness with earnestness; and all will go well: how, no one can say, any more than, when a ship is lanched, one can be sure what voyages she will have to make. But for an ill-built vessel no sea is smooth, and no wind fair."

To return to Sterling's life at Falmouth: broken as his health was and unfit for continuous exertion, he still did far more for others than most persons in the fullest health think of attempting. Earnestly desirous of promoting the intellectual and moral culture of the inhabitants, he induced some of his friends to join with him in establishing a course of lectures at the Polytechnic Institution, and himself gave the opening one, which is printed at the end of this volume, and another on Greek sculpture, though he had for seven years been unable to speak in public without yearly increasing danger. He took an active part, as he had done years before when he was curate in my parish, in setting up a book-club for the poor. Those who were in sorrow he comforted and strengthened, by teaching them the wisdom of trying to help others. He felt a special interest in encouraging and advising the Cornish

artists, the style of whose paintings is said to have been visibly improved since they listened to his criticisms; for he never shrank from the duty, so irksome to most men, of pointing out their faults and failures. Whatever could be done for the education of the poor, he still as ever hailed with fervent pleasure; and in the autumn of 1840 he declared that the Church had taken the greatest step in national education since the days of Luther.

The revision of his early writings in *Blackwood* occupied him in the autumn of 1841. Two years later he said that his opinions had changed on many points, so that some of these things had become almost as strange to him as if written by some one else; but, he added, "Writing them did me great good; and they gave a high pleasure to her whose sympathy was then my all in all. Whether they have any lasting worth for others, time alone can show. One must think often of what Cornelius, the painter, said: *I starved for twenty years; and then the world came round to me.* Providence has freed me from the risk of starving; and I can trust myself for bearing cheerfully any amount of neglect from the public, which in truth is an affliction that does not cost me a thought a month."

In the beginning of 1842 he was deprived of one of his most intimate friends. "Since I wrote last I have lost Calvert, the man with whom, of all others, I have been during late years the most intimate. Simplicity, benevolence, practical sense, and moral earnestness were his great, unfailing characteristics; and no man, I believe, ever possessed them more entirely. His illness had latterly so prostrated him both in mind and body, that those who most loved him were most anxious for his departure. My own health is such as to make my thoughts very conversant with the grave, with futurity, and with whatever lasts in the midst of our fluctuations. The daily loss of all we most value seems to me almost the only natural course of things; and the idea of what supplies and compensations remain, or are added, gains additional force from every blow that prunes us. What most lastingly pains me is the reflection on the discords needlessly admitted into my life, and the pain unreasonably given to others."

Sterling's feelings, on the death of his friend, were thus expressed in the Epitaph which was graven on his tombstone:—

Pure soul! strong, kind, and peaceful, 'mid the pain
That racked and solemnized thy torch of love,
Here in our world below we mourn in vain,
But would not call thee from thy world above.

Of varied wisdom, and of heart sincere,
Through gloomy ways thy feet unfaltering trod;
Reason thy lamp, and Faith thy star while here,
Now both one brightness in the light of God.

Some time before, his affection for this friend had dictated the following lines:—

'Tis true, dear friend, there was a time
When life could ring a merrier chime
Than aught the present hears:
But, while our hearts those days recall,
There is a bliss exceeding all
We felt in other years.

For still the thought of things gone by
Relieves of pain the lingering sigh
We give to former woe,
And fills with finer joy the sense
Of happiness that, once intense,
Has now a starry glow.

To float on Memory's twilight seas,
We spread a quiet sail at ease,
Beneath a crescent moon:
The dead around, the young, the fair,
Seem whispering through the silent air
That we shall meet them soon.

And thou and I, dear friend, whose life
Has been so full of toil and strife,
By sorrow led to Truth,
May learn, in mutual peace and love,
That man is made for hopes above
The pleasures dear to youth.

About this time one of his friends who best knew him, Mr. Mill, wrote thus: "I fear not

so much for his bodily state, as for his spirits. It is so hard for an active mind like his to reconcile itself to comparative idleness, and to what he considers as uselessness, only however from his inability to persuade himself of the good which his society, his correspondence, and the very existence of such a man diffuses through the world. If he did but know the moral, and even intellectual influence which he exercises, without writing or publishing anything, he would think it quite worth living for, even if he were never to be capable of writing again."

In consequence of a continual slight hemorrhage, he was advised, early in the spring of 1842, to take a voyage for a couple of months about the Mediterranean. But this did not avail to restore his health, as his former journeys had done. Soon after his return he wrote thus: "The only really satisfactory part of my tour was the three weeks at Naples and in its neighbourhood, which have left matter for three centuries of profitable remembrance. The works of art in that gallery are hardly less valuable than at Rome; and Pompeii and Pæstum are unsurpassed in interest even by the Vatican. These things teach what human nature, especially in youth, is slow and sad to learn, that the world

has lost as well as gained much in two thousand years,—lost perhaps as irreparably as it has gained securely. Faintly and from a distance as we must now converse with the art of Greece, we must yet learn more and more to doubt if there is any living voice of equal power. It is not so certain that 'the oracles are dumb,' but plain enough that the ears are deaf. At Rome, after a week, I began to grow ill, and set out suddenly. But that week has left some clear images, mixed with much personal, private sadness. St. Peter's, with its altar lighted and its windows darkened, is a new and potent image. Pisa and Genoa I saw, each of them for a few hours, and both with much pleasure. A week in France did little for me, especially as I staid too short a time in Paris to see the Louvre. But France is alive and active compared with Italy; and one felt oneself again in the modern actual world. A young naval officer, a Vicomte and man of science, who has been round and in the world, and is entrusted with the French Government experiments on the Archimedes screw, gave me much agreeable talk, and is the neatest example I have seen of the positive side of our civilization."

Writing to another friend of this journey, he said: "My run of two months gave me three

delightful weeks at and near Naples, quite new ground, and meriting all its old and late renown. The landscapes are perfect, which can be said of few others known to me. Pompeii, and the treasures drawn from it, especially the ancient fresco paintings, have an interest beyond any visible remains of classic life I know; and the great temple at Pæstum is the most beautiful of all buildings, at least for a man who has not visited Sicily or Greece.—In thinking of these objects, they come before the eye with a vivid beauty, such as to uncultivated men must carry with it a sense of outwardness and revelation. The only drawback from Naples was the want of any friend of like mind; yet few portions of life have been equally pleasant and fruitful. At Rome,—to which I travelled by land, through Capua and Anxur, (a beautiful journey as far as this last place, now Terracina,)—I spent but nine days, two or three of them lost from illness. There all was both new and old: such another week earth could not furnish me."

Soon after his return from Italy, Sterling began a poem on Cœur de Lion. He intended this to be the work of his life, to go on and grow with him, and stand all the tests he could give it in after years. Several books were written some-

what in the manner of Ariosto. It was designed to exhibit a kind of typical view of the education of a man, taking Richard through various adventures and experiences, until his rough and rugged nature was subdued and mellowed into harmony. "Of how far grander growth (he said) were the men of old times than of ours. The earth may be everywhere more green and luxuriant; but there are none of those giant oaks and ferns which it bore in former ages. Some say that there is compensation in the more general cultivation: but it is a poor compensation not to live in an age of great men. We have so much fewer examples now of moral and intellectual greatness combined than formerly." Yet at the same time he complained of Carlyle's utterly condemning our age as void of faith and heroism. "There is more of the heroism of domestic life now (he said) than in any age of the world." He longed much to write on Shakspeare as the son of his time, but did not feel strength for such a work. He sometimes expressed wonder whether the many things of which his mind was full would go on and be brought to perfection in another world.

In the following September, 1842, he wrote to me. "You may perhaps have heard that this

summer has been a bad one with me. Illness has unfitted me during the last two months for any kind of work, and almost for writing even a note.—The loss of Arnold, whom I never saw, has grieved me as if he had been a friend.—When in Italy, in spring, *Adii Corinthum,* I saw Pæstum, and thought of your delight in a vision, which to me also was one of the strangest and most delightful on earth. What I was least prepared for was the beauty of the antique frescoes at Naples; but all was beautiful. Latterly even Italy has faded from me; and, being sick and weak, the sense of spiritual incoherence and debility in the whole land, and in almost all its utterances, has lain on me more heavily than I can tell you.—Much, on your account, do I rejoice to hear that Bunsen is to be at Herstmonceux. Dear Herstmonceux! that I can cease to think of only when I think no longer.

"The at least seemingly successful attack made by Strauss on much of the scriptural narrative makes it a desperate engine among uncultivated minds for overthrowing the whole of Christianity. They are now translating it for the poor; and in their dreadfully untaught state the ruin of historical religion will appear to involve the fate of all moral obligation. The accounts I hear from

very competent persons, of the utter absence of any religious feeling and any kind of thought among huge masses of the manufacturing poor, daily amaze me; and my own knowledge of the state of some of the peasantry, combined with this kind of information, goes far to satisfy me that all our institutions have been almost entirely worthless for humanizing the poor as a class.—We never have had any form of religion since the Reformation efficient among the poor; and it seems probable that any fit for the purpose must assume a very different shape from that which the Clergy generally are as yet prepared to acknowledge. It is said that Wesleyanism is now not at all progressive; and, so far as I can learn, no kind of fanaticism, providing any serious check on brutality, makes way in the large towns of the North. What will come of it all, who dares prophecy, or almost guess? Arnold I believe to have been one of the very few, perhaps the only man in England, seeing the whole evil, and prepared to make such changes in the Church-system as might possibly have rendered it effectual for its nominal purpose among those who most need a moral reform. Here the real Church is Wesleyan; but over three-fourths of England there is, I fear, none."

Soon afterwards he was greatly delighted by Tieck's *Vittoria Accorombona.* "I am not sure that it is not the most remarkable novel I know. In intensity and range it is far superior to *Don Quixote,* in depth and truth to all English and all French fictions. In *Wilhelm Meister* there is no strictly moral aim; but there is an analogous ideal one, and a standard of cultivation, though not of duty, towards which the personages tend. But in *Vittoria* Tieck seems inspired by the feeling that there is no rule of life whatever, conformity to which is not too dearly bought by the abatement of our energies. The most fearful crimes, and the utter disorganization of society, are shown as tolerable, and even attractive, when accompanied by the richness and freedom of individual existence and enormous human energy. If a German be excusable for feeling this, in a country where art and science and religion are all impelled and united by so strong a living creative spirit, no wonder that we, in the stench of our material wealth, and the deadness of all noble thought, should often be overwhelmed by the same faith or fancy.—I have also read with much pleasure Lücke's notice of K. O. Müller. I suppose Müller's preference of the Dorians must be explained by the fact that his studies had

chiefly lain towards the earlier period of Greek history."

About the same time he wrote to a friend who had been translating the *Edda*. "Your translation is often very happy, full of those short, sharp-cut words, that carry home the meaning at a stroke. As to the book itself, there is less of the tone of ancient simple-hearted truth than I had hoped, though no doubt many of the materials may have arisen in that way. I have made no enquiries into the matter, nor even considered it very deeply; but it seems to me at first sight that the old legends had become, before they were fixed in this form, mere popular tales, like those in *Grimm's Mährchen*. Thor's journey is certainly very grim-wise, and with a light touch of humour: curious to compare it with the adventures of Hercules. But on the whole how poor is everything, matched against the mythology of the Greeks! They must remain till the end of time the mythologists of mankind. There have been Christian poets as great as any; but, for a complete, infinite, poetic world, we must still go back to Olympus and Arcadia, and all that belongs to them. The day, one hopes, may come, when, pedants having ceased to seek either true history or false religion in that beautiful creation, it will

become known to all the earth, even the now gross, suffering multitude, as an inexhaustible treasure-house of noble joys.—Thorwaldsen's statues I have seen in plaster, and can conceive how far more striking they must be in the Church for which they were intended. He is however not at all preeminently a Christian sculptor, though much the greatest since Michael Angelo. It was very curious to observe in his studio at Rome, that his design for the hearers of Homer rhapsodizing is substantially the same as that for the company gathered about the Baptist, which fills a pediment of the Copenhagen Church. It is too much, no doubt, to say, as some have said, that there can be no Christian sculpture; but certainly the spirit of the Gospel has never been as perfectly exhibited in this form of art, or art of form, as in the Cartoons and some of the Madonnas of Raphael, and even in the works of some earlier painters. The grave equipoise of soul, expressed in symmetric images, is evidently Thorwaldsen's predominant characteristic: and this is appropriate to moral and philosophical, not to devotional elevation. Did you ever hear the story of his being at a party at Bunsen's, whose house was on the Capitoline Hill, on the site of the Temple of Olympian Jove, and where the conver-

sation, as often under Bunsen's guidance, took a very Christian turn, till Thorwaldsen rémarked through the window, commanding a noble prospect of Rome, the modern city, the planet Jupiter in great glory, and filling his glass exclaimed: *Well! Here's in honour of the ancient Gods.*—As to literary matters I have not been in the way of hearing much. I saw in some periodical a review of poems by an Oxford man, a Mr. Faber, which seemed to me to show a really poetic feeling, in the dreamy flow of the verse, and soft involution of the images. But, on the whole, poetry is well-nigh dead among us: it counts for nothing among the great working forces of the age, except so far as Wordsworth's idyllic and didactic songs in some slight degree counteract the coarse materialism of society, and the superstitious literalism of the Church. Carlyle is the great antagonist of these evils; and his new volume on Heroes will perhaps be more widely felt than anything he has done; and, in spite of some considerable exaggerations, is on the whole more free from delusive paradox, than his other works, and quite equal to the best of them in glow, force, and prophetic insight. There is nothing to me stranger, than that a man of our time, with wide literary culture, should have so fully the prophetic immediateness and

intensity; of which there is, I believe, no other example in recent ages, except among the uninstructed. England goes on with its old, blind, unerring force, in its railroad fashion, and commands the wonder and even respect of men, while it does little towards enlightening them. We are strange, neat-handed Titans, and, if wanting fire from Heaven, make at least the cheapest and most polished of patent lamps for receiving it when it shall come."

For many years Sterling had been tried by various forms and degrees of sickness; but he had also to drink deeply of the other cup of human suffering, before his earthly course was closed. At the beginning of 1843 he broke a blood-vessel by over-exerting himself in helping a maid-servant to carry a weight which he thought too heavy for her. This was followed by two months of anxious nursing, during which, as ever, his constant care was lest his attendants should wear themselves out by waiting upon him; and he would often send away his wife to rest, saying, "It would be so sad for the children to lose us both." In the month of March he had gained strength enough to go to London for a few days, to see his mother, whose health was rapidly declining. On this occasion I had the happiness

of spending a couple of hours with him; for a great happiness it was, notwithstanding the painful shock of seeing the change which years of sickness had wrought in his form and features, and though other changes, still sadder to me, had interrupted that close union of thought and feeling which at one time subsisted between us. We had not met for several years; and we both perhaps were half afraid that this twofold separation might have produced some sort of estrangement. But this fear instantly vanished; and we felt that our affection was undiminished. On his return to Falmouth he wrote to me: "My journey to London, and the cold it gave me, would have been worth while, had it only been for the sake of seeing you. In much that I had reckoned on, I was disappointed, by being confined to the house; but this more than made up for all: only I have been thinking ever since of the many things I ought to have asked about. Heaven grant the summer do not pass without our meeting again!"

Alas! this wish was unfulfilled. Anxiety about his wife's approaching confinement had made him hasten home sooner than he otherwise would have done. On Good Friday, 1843, he wrote to me: "This Friday is doubly good. My wife has just been brought to bed of a stout

little girl; and they are both doing as well as possible." On the following Monday however a great change took place in her, though not enough to alarm the physicians. He watched over her through the night, during which she rapidly became worse; and early on the Tuesday morning he sent for the physicians. When the post came in, he left the room to see what account it brought of his mother, She had died on Easter Sunday. He returned to his wife, who asked what tidings he had received. He told her. She murmured, "Poor old man!" meaning his widowed father, and never spoke again. Ere long she had ceased to breathe; and within two hours he found himself deprived both of his mother and of his wife.

He had always loved his mother with the tenderest affection. In a note written a few days before her death, he said: "All is confusion and dismay; but I still try to read and work. When I think of my childhood, I feel that I can only cry. Gray might well say, *I now feel that a man can have but one mother;* and mine did a thousand times more for me, than most women have head or heart to do for their sons. But for her, I might have been a fool or a money-maker; and she is perhaps at this moment expiring." His wife was a woman of a noble character, of great

energy and self-controul, with high intellectual endowments, for which he had such respect, that whatever he wrote was submitted to her judgement; and he often spoke of the help he derived, especially from her musical ear. Sometimes he would write his poems in a different metre, if she did not think them harmonious. Her duties as a wife and mother were fulfilled with the devotion of all her faculties to them: her love for him was boundless as his for her. It might have been thought that this twofold blow, falling so suddenly and at once on one who was so much enfeebled, must have crushed him. But with Sterling the feeling of duty overcame every hindrance. He could not give himself up even to such sorrow, when his duty to his children commanded him to repress it. He called them round him, told them of their loss, and wrote down these words, "The Lord gave; and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!" and "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted;" which he desired them to copy out, and learn. He told them that he must now try to be a Mother as well as a Father to them. On the evening after the funeral, feeling quite worn out, he said to them, as he bade them good night: "If I am taken from you, God will take care of you."

A fortnight after, he wrote: "I have felt the kindness of your letter far more deeply than I can now attempt to express. It has been one of many consolations granted to me during the last weeks, which I have found of far more efficacy, than I could have before imagined. The thought of her, and of her excellence, and the confident hope that we are not divided for ever, have been my great blessings. But my children, my friends have also been invaluable ministers of good to me."

In the month of June he removed from Falmouth to Ventnor, partly for the sake of being nearer to his relations and to most of his friends, and partly because every object at Falmouth reminded him too painfully of his loss. "It appeared (he wrote) to be decidedly the opinion of the medical men that the climate of Ventnor is the best attainable in England; access to one's friends is far easier than from Torquay; and there are much better educational advantages than at other places recommended for their winter mildness. The country is very pretty, the people civil, and not beggarly. Prices are high; but the only serious disadvantage is the distance from Herstmonceux, and all places where I can see the face of a friend. In this respect, as well as some

others, my departure from Falmouth was very grievous. But one's work in life, or half of it, is to bear pain patiently; and it all can be borne if one chooses." At times during that summer he talked of paying me a visit. "I have been in thought visiting Herstmonceux numberless times, and now and then have fancied I could do so without too much pain. The other day I was on the point of going to Brighton; and it would have been easy to go on. My journey was stopped by a cold. But before that, I had nearly made up my mind, that no pleasure my visit could bring to others would counterbalance the misery I must myself endure in again visiting that place. Such feelings cannot be brought under rule, and no doubt are also very wayward. To-morrow I may think differently; but for a few days I shall not be able to leave London; and even then I doubt whether I shall be in a state to approach you. There are some spots, where it seems to me that I could have no business unless to die."

Intellectual employment was always indispensable to Sterling. During the summer of 1843 he revised and printed his tragedy of *Strafford*. "That I should do so (he wrote) was the strong wish of one whose wishes are now all-powerful with me, as well they may be. Laud, I fear,

remains with all the blots that offended you. Whatever may be the historical fact, the empty violence of the man, as I have drawn him, is requisite for contrast, and to round the circle of characters presented.—I have been reading some German books. Tieck's *Novellen* have been interesting me much, though time has failed for more than four or five of the little volumes. Some of the shorter and simpler tales, as the *Gelehrte* and the *Weihnachtsabend*, are delightful. In the longer and more ambitious he is often either prolix or exaggerated; and the essential formative idea is sometimes a very obvious one, though richly disguised. In these respects how inferior to Goethe, and yet how superior in all to any part of modern English literature!—A friend brought me some weeks ago from Germany one of the latest and most important of the Hegelian attacks on Schelling, a volume of Lectures by Michelet. I have only dipped into it; but it rather pleases me. It is the most lucid German composition on philosophy that I remember, except Fichte's writings. One cannot, I think, help, rather doubting whether Schelling really has any great idea in reserve, other than those of his early works. If so, it will be hard to extinguish the Hegelian system, which seems to have grown so

naturally and necessarily out of the previous stage of thought. Living as we do in England, to read a German book on these matters is like knocking one's head through the blue sky, and getting a view at the other side of the stars, not, I think, the wrong side. The state of thought and of life among us is indeed wretched enough compared with what one would wish; but compared with twenty years ago there does seem a considerable improvement, a better tone among young men, a more open mind in literature, less of that monstrous national self-satisfaction, and more humanity and sense in politics. This good however, such as it is, seems very weak, vague, and shapeless, and, above all, has no sufficient chiefs and representatives. The real strength of the nation still seems to be almost all of that brute mechanic kind. Think if we had a dozen men to stand up for ideas, as Cobden and his friends do for machinery.—Has all our hope of a better day disappeared with Arnold? Lately I saw here a pupil of his, who spoke of him with that enthusiasm which is so beautiful in all his better scholars. From him I heard of A.'s panic veneration for the talents, at least, of Newman,—a feeling to me incomprehensible. That Newman has much shrewdness and some elegance

of mind, is clear enough; but how any one accustomed to read Plato and Aristotle, Schleiermacher, or even Neander, can do more than smile at his helpless dullness on the ground of principles, of ideas, this is to me very odd." Among the signs of the improvement in the state of thought and feeling, which Sterling here hails, was the Charge delivered that year by Archdeacon Manning, which he read with the greatest interest and delight.

The winter of 1843 was passed without any alarming attack, though with gradually increasing weakness. But on the 4th of April, 1844, a slight exertion caused the breaking of a blood-vessel, and a hemorrhage so violent, that the persons around him thought it must be fatal. Still, through the care and skill of his friend and physician, Dr. Martin, and the singular elasticity of his constitution, he rallied again; although he had a strong presentiment that the Easter Tuesday, which was the anniversary of his loss, would be the day of his own death. Soon however it became too plain that the improvement must needs be brief, and that the progress of the disease, at the utmost, could only be retarded for a few months. Even for this he had to submit to the privation of not seeing his children for more than

a few minutes a day. He was forbidden to see any of his friends, except his brothers and his wife's sister, whom he had long loved and revered as a pattern of all that is most excellent in womanhood, and who had nursed him with the tenderest care during his extreme danger in April. In this state of what he deemed utter uselessness, he wrote: "Is it wrong to pray that this cup may pass away? but I hope I may be enabled to submit and endure. By far my greatest privation, independent of the unspeakable one that ended my Falmouth life, is the want of all society with my friends. Hare and F. Newman, as well as others, would have come to see me; but I was obliged to decline. This is my first experience of passing months without any intellectual intercourse except on paper. My days pass fast; but a great charm is wanting."

About the same time he wrote to me: "I also had been thinking a thousand times of writing to you, especially as there neither was nor is any chance of my being well enough to see you. Much however of the last three months has been spent in recollection of my friends, and with more unmixed thankfulness than for any blessing of my life, except my marriage. The faces of the poor people at Herstmonceux have also recurred to me

very often, especially of some whom I saw dying there. Though with so much less of outward comfort, their patience exceeded mine; yet on any ground I have little to complain of. This world lies even now clear and bright before me, and, being good in itself, is the prelusive image of a still better one. It will be a most blessed release when I am called away; for I cannot hope ever again to be of the smallest use in this world. Farewell! You can never know the fondness with which I recall the minutest portion of our intercourse. We shall meet again, be well assured. Christianity is a great comfort and blessing to me, although I am quite unable to believe all its original documents. I am thankful for all things, and hope much."

Still, even at this time, he read much, and with a lively interest. Happening one day to open a volume of William Law's works, he met with his answer to Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, which struck him as so satisfactory a refutation of the immoral systems of that age, that he could not rest till he had written to his brother-in-law, Mr. Maurice, and sought for his assistance in reprinting it; which plan was executed soon after. The thought of being still able to help others gave him such a spring for the moment, that those who

were about him half fancied he was growing stronger.

One of his chief employments during these months of extreme debility was writing daily letters to his eldest son, whom he had just sent to King's College School. He had little strength for other correspondence; but he wished that his son should have this lasting memorial of a father's love; and while he tried to adapt his letters to the capacity of a boy, he desired to furnish him with some of the results of his own experience in life, with short sketches of his chief friends, and with exhortations to cultivate manly energy and truth.

Another daily employment was to read over his own papers, letters, journals, and unfinished compositions; large piles of which were committed to the flames. At the same time he found an amusement and interest in correcting some of his previous poems, and making additions to them. On the 1st of September he wrote:—"During the last week I have had much of enjoyment, mainly while composing; though I must warn you that what I write now may turn out very feeble and wandering, when submitted to other eyes. There is however, unless I am greatly deceived, a character of calmness, and hope, and

mellow evening peace diffused through these little things, that will at least interest my friends. Their affection has also been a real comfort. There was a note from Carlyle not long since, I think the noblest and tenderest thing that ever came from human pen. Mill's letters have been almost equally remarkable, and, considering the man, are perhaps much more so. Newman has been all in word and deed that man could be. A letter of Emerson had more heart than one would suppose could be found in all America. Trench, in spite of much inward and outward separation, has shewn himself what he always was, one whose feelings are pure as crystal, and warm as the sun. Of the Maurices and my brother, I need not write. But the knowledge of how they all felt has been a real and constant comfort at the times when I most wanted it."

The practice of writing verses continued with him even till the very last. In a note dated on the 17th of September, he said, with reference to a poem entitled *the Litany of Great Men*, which had appeared in *Blackwood* in the preceding March: "The last of the heroes in my bead-roll is, you may remember, Shelley; then comes

> "Regent of poetic mountains,
> Drawing from their deepest fountains

Freshness, pure and everlasting,
Wordsworth, dear and honoured name,
O'er thee pause the stars, forecasting
Thy imperishable fame."

He added that he had been reading a good deal of Wordsworth, and was more than ever struck by his strong sense of righteousness, comparing it very favorably with the passionate, but confused, utterances of some other writers, and declaring his conviction that Wordsworth was incomparably the greatest writer of his time. "Coleridge might have been so; only he would not take the trouble."

In one of his notes at this time he said that he had gained but little good from what he had heard or read of Theology; but "what gives me the greatest comfort are those words in the Lord's Prayer, *Thy will be done.*"

On the 16th of September there was a great and sudden increase of weakness, which convinced him and those around him that the end was at hand. In this conviction he said: "I thank the All-wise One." His sister remarked the next day that he was unusually cheerful. He lay on the sofa quietly, telling her of little things that he wished her to do for him, and choosing out books to be sent to his friends. On the 18th he was again comforted by letters from Mr. Trench and

Mr. Mill, to whom he took pleasure in scribbling some little verses of thanks. Then, writing a few lines in pencil, he gave them to his sister, saying, "This is for you; you will care more for this!" The lines were—

Could we but hear all Nature's voice,
From Glowworm up to Sun,
'Twould speak with one concordant sound,
"Thy will, O God, be done!"

But hark, a sadder, mightier prayer
From all men's hearts that live,
"Thy will be done in earth and heaven,
And Thou my sins forgive!"

These were the last words he wrote. He murmured over the last two lines to himself. He had been very quiet all that day, little inclined to read or speak, until the evening, when he talked a little to his sister. As it grew dusk, he appeared to be seeking for something, and, on her asking what he wanted, said, "Only the old Bible, which I used so often at Herstmonceux in the cottages;" and which generally lay near him. A little later his brother arrived from London, with whom he conversed cheerfully for a few minutes. He was then left to settle for the night. But soon he grew worse; and the servant summoned the family to his room. He was no longer able to recognise them. The

last struggle was short; and before eleven o'clock his spirit had departed.

He was buried in the beautiful little churchyard of Bonchurch.

In drawing up this memorial of my dear Friend, my chief materials have been a long course of letters which I received from him during the last sixteen years of his life, and another rich series of letters to Mr. Trench. To these have been added a few very interesting letters to another friend, and some recollections supplied by persons who were intimate with him in his latter years. Doubtless many more of his letters must be extant; and though few of them can have exprest his inmost thoughts and feelings so fully as those I have had to make use of, all must be instinct with that genial life which characterized every movement of his spirit. If any of his friends, who may have preserved such letters, will entrust me with them, I will gladly insert such portions as may seem to throw fresh light on his character and opinions, should I live to see these volumes reach a second edition.

I have felt it a solemn duty to speak of my Friend's errors as well as of that in him which was noblest and wisest, and which I could most

heartily sympathize with and admire. Had I omitted the former, the representation would have been false,—a procedure unjustifiable in all cases, above all, in the portraiture of one who hated every kind of falsehood with an intense hatred, and whose spirit burnt with a consuming love of truth; not indeed like the fiery bush, which is the type of the very highest minds, such as St. Paul's and Luther's, when the Spirit of God takes possession of them; but with a flame approaching more nearly thereto than is often found in this world of phantoms and interests. I do not mean that every foolish, intemperate word a wise man may utter, and every wrong act a good man may perform, is to be scrupulously noted down in any earthly Book of Judgement. That which in its nature is transient and perishable, should be allowed to pass away: the decayed leaves should be left in the mould with which they have mingled: But it is not so with errors which have gained a permanent influence, which have shaped the growth of the tree. A bent tree is not to be drawn as a straight one; or the truth of history vanishes, and its use as a discipline of knowledge and of wisdom. Hence the representation of my friend's life is unsatisfactory. By the omission of certain portions, it might easily have been made

to appear more satisfactory: but then it would have been a lie: and every lie,—O that people would believe it!—is at best but a whited sepulchre. The representation of his life is unsatisfactory, because the problem of his life was incomplete. That problem, as has been truly observed to me by one of his chief friends, was the same as the great problem of our age. In fact, it was the same with the great problem of all ages, to reconcile faith with knowledge, philosophy with religion, the subjective world of human speculation with the objective world in which God has manifested Himself by a twofold Revelation, outwardly to our senses, and spiritually to our spirits. Nay, this is only the intellectual side of the problem, though not merely intellectual, inasmuch as in the higher regions of thought the wings of the intellect flag and droop, unless a moral power nerve and sustain them. For what is the great moral problem of mankind,—though in this, since the will is the main seat of our weakness, we have wandered still more widely from its true solution,—but to strive after a like atonement? From the first dawn of speculation, man has ever been endeavouring to solve this great problem under one form or other; and it has ever been receiving fresh, though only partial solutions.

Even since it was solved once for all, for every practical purpose of life, by the Incarnation of the Word, new forms of the speculative problem have been continually presenting themselves: every new solution has disclosed a deeper mystery still unsolved: nor has any form of it been more perplexing than that in which it presents itself to the meditative minds of our own times. If we look through the recent history of thought, especially in Germany, where thought upon such subjects has been far more active and vigorous than elsewhere, we may see what powers have been engaged in it, and what powers have been baffled, at least so far as only to attain to a very partial and inconclusive solution. One wizard after another has bid the waves be still, and then, deluded by a momentary lull, has fancied that he had found out the spell to bind them: but anon they have swollen, and tost, and roared; and he too has been swept along by them. It is true, very many, nay, the great bulk of mankind may find peace in some partial solution of the problem, and may walk on quietly and straightforward along the path of life, without troubling themselves about the doubts and questionings which are incessantly lifting up their heads on each side of it, to scare and mock all such as stop to look at

them. But there are minds, whose lot it is to grapple with the hardest problems of their age, and who cannot rest until they have solved them, —men who seem to regard it as their appointed task to descend to the gates of Hades, and bring back Cerberus in chains; and of these men Sterling was one. Nor are such men to be dismist with a cold taunt, or a severe reproof, as wasting themselves unprofitably in grubbing about the roots, instead of feeding on the fruit. For the roots too may often need to have the soil about them loosened, and uncongenial substances removed: nor is it well to blame those who devote themselves to this more arduous labour, in order that others may have more abundant and better fruit to feed on. If the great problems of speculation, which are continually rising up as our horizon widens, are left unexplored,—if those who are set to be the guiding spirits of their age, pass them by, and are content provided they can evade and escape from them, or if they try to impose upon their followers by denying their existence or their magnitude and danger, the vessel after a while will assuredly strike against the rock, and founder. In such a state of things, falsehood is sure to creep in, and to spread from mind to mind, from heart to heart, with hollowness, hypocrisy, and a

whole legion of fiends in its train. We must do the work that is set us to do, the intellectual work, as well as the moral: we must not shirk it, or slur it over: and this is a part of it.

Moreover, in every age, beside the speculative difficulties which present themselves to the intellect, there are vast practical difficulties, arising from the corruption of the will, evils pervading the whole frame of society, evils against which man is appointed to combat, but which the slaves of Custom allow to subsist as inevitable: and never were these difficulties, these evils, greater or more appalling than in our age; never perhaps was there a huger mass of misery and corruption lying around the foundations of the splendid fabric of society. Here is another great problem, which the earnest lover of truth and good must set himself: and when he sees how shamefully it has been neglected by those who ought, at the cost of their heart's best blood, to have sought its solution, he may easily grow to look with indignant scorn on them; even as he may be apt to feel scorn for those who altogether neglect the speculative problem. This scorn too may easily extend itself to the untempered mortar, whereby the difficulties are plastered over, and hid from the eyes of the multitude.

Now Sterling, throughout his life, had a very lively and painful feeling of the difficulty and momentousness of both these problems, as may be seen even in his earliest writings in the *Athenæum*; though of course one of them would come forward more distinctly and forcibly at one time, at another time the other: and, by the law of his nature, Thought and Feeling were immediately to issue in Action. His energy compelled him to strive with all his might for the removal of the evils which he saw and felt. When he was allowed to devote himself to this work, the discords within him, which are ever the harsher in the natural man in proportion to his strength, seemed to be softening into concord. But, as I have observed before, when the vent of practical activity was closed against him, his intellectual impulses gradually became too restless to be kept in co-ordination with the established order of the world. His feelings of the evils in the intellectual and moral state of society preyed upon his heart. He began to deem himself the opponent, the antagonist of everything that is. Hence, by an almost inevitable transfer, he regarded himself as separated and alienated from those whose work it is to carry out the present institutions of society; and, what was one of the

bitterest of all draughts to a person of his strong affections, he fancied himself cut off and estranged from many whom he had regarded with the highest admiration and love. For by his circumstances he was unhappily deprived of those reconciling influences, which we derive in practical life from perceiving how many, even of those who seem at variance with us, are in fact labouring in their several stations for the same great end, though it may be with a very narrow and imperfect discernment of it. Owing to these causes, Sterling, in his latter years, as we have seen, felt almost driven to take refuge in the serener regions of poetry and art. To this the state of his health also greatly contributed. As he says of himself so pathetically in one of his letters (page ci.), his "life had ceased to be a chain, and fell into a heap of broken links." This of itself was incompatible with continuous exertion in any severer study; whence it was more difficult for him to wade through the dreary morass of negatives to the firm land beyond. Thus, through the chasm thrown across his life by the interruption of his practical exertions, it became wholly incomplete. Indeed we may look upon it as having been broken off, so to say, at the end of the fourth act. The primary, partial

solution at the end of the third act had been succeeded by a fresh, wider, deeper gulf of entanglements and perplexities; and he did not live to attain to the higher solution of the fifth act. Few men do; in our age only here and there one. Still the germs of that higher and deeper reconciliation may be discerned in some of his last words, and in those last precious lines which he wrote, and which prove how entirely he had been delivered, during the solitude and silence of his sick room, from all forms of pantheistic delusion,—if indeed he was ever bewildered thereby,—and how the consciousness of sin, and of the need of forgiveness, was still predominant in his soul.

It may be thought that the story of Sterling's life is a warning to refrain from all speculation. But this would be to misread and pervert it. When we listen to those most beautiful and gracious words, in which our Lord gives thanks to the Father, that He has hid the mysteries of heaven from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them to babes, are we to conclude from them, that God has set a ban against wisdom and prudence, and has excluded the wise and the prudent from the kingdom of Heaven? Surely this cannot be. Even the deplorable shipwreck of

Solomon is not to teach us this lesson. For what does the whole history of the Church declare? Was Moses, who was skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians, debarred thereby from receiving the revelation of the eternal I AM? Was St. Paul shut out from the kingdom of Heaven? or Athanasius, or Augustin, or Bernard, or Hooker? Our Lord's words are indeed a warning, and so is the whole volume of the Scriptures, from the story of the Fall downward, against man's natural proneness to overrate worldly wisdom and knowledge, and to believe that of himself he can penetrate into the mysteries of God. But on the other hand it ought only to render us the more indulgent toward those who have these heavy incumbrances to struggle with. We ought to judge them the more leniently for this very reason. If there is any man, who, having exerted himself laboriously and perseveringly to pry into the hidden recesses of our nature, to pierce through the unfathomable abyss of evil, and to catch a glimpse of the light and glory beyond and behind, can say he has never been shaken or troubled in the calm composure of his faith, let him cast a stone at Sterling: I cannot. Nor should they, who, never having engaged in such enquiries, can form no estimate of the difficulties

besetting them. The reader of Cowper's Letters may remember how, in speaking of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, he says to Newton, that he had "observed but one man in the whole number, whose mind seemed to have the slightest tincture of religion." In this there was a good deal of morbid exaggeration, arising from the narrowness of Cowper's own religious views at the time; for Milton was one of the poets thus condemned in a mass, as not having the slightest tincture of religion. Something too is attributable to the Biographer's incapacity for representing man's inner life. Still, with all these deductions, the fact noticed may serve as an instance of the separation, almost the divorce, which took place between man's intellectual and spiritual faculties a century and a half ago. If we look through a list of the historians during the same period, or of the metaphysicians, or of the men of science, the same fact forces itself upon us. There are divers exceptions indeed; but the majority bear witness that the intellect of man had thrown off its allegiance to Christian truth. In many cases no doubt this sprang from some moral perversity wresting the judgement awry. But it must also be conceded that the advocates of Christian truth did not set it forth in that simple, convincing majesty, which would

have constrained the intellect to bow before it. Nor can any one be well acquainted with the state of the intellectual world in our days, without knowing that the same phenomenon is still lamentably frequent, not merely in France and Germany, but also in England. Among men of intellectual vigour, I will not say the majority, but undoubtedly a very large portion, are only withheld from open infidelity by giving up their thoughts entirely to the business of this world, and turning away with a compromising indifference from serious enquiries about religion. In such a state of things it becomes the imperative duty of all who love the truth in Christ, to purge it, so far as they can, from the alloy which it may have contracted in the course of ages through the admixture of human conceits, and which renders it irreconcilable with the postulates of the intellect. This is indeed a very delicate work, and accompanied with many risks; and many will go astray in attempting to accomplish it. But still it must be done. The men of our days will not believe, unless you prove to them that what they are called upon to believe, does not contradict the laws of their minds, and that it rests upon a solid, unshakable foundation. We cannot arrest the winds or the waves; nor can we arrest the

blasts and tides of thought. These too blow and roll where they list. We may indeed employ them both; but, to turn them to account, we must suffer ourselves to be impelled and borne along by them, without fainting at the thought of the perils we may have to encounter, and in the hope that, with the help of our heavenly compass, we may render those tumultuous elements subservient to the good of mankind. Fresh obstacles are ever rising across our path; and we must assail them. If we do so, though some lives may be lost in the attack, one obstruction after another will gradually be removed. Now Sterling was one of the men, whose nature commanded him to stand in the van of human progress. He belonged to the body-guard of him who might be called by the name of the heroic Prussian, Marshal Forwards. If there was a post of danger, he would rush to it; if a forlorn hope was sent out, he would be among the first to join it. Such men we honour, although they fall; nay, we honour them the more, because they fall. Of the mystery of their fall we cannot judge; but we may trust that he, who, so far as we can discern, has earnestly loved Truth, and sincerely desired to serve

the God of Truth, will be judged by the God of Mercy: and we may feel sure that the prayer for forgiveness, when it rises from the depths of a departing spirit, cannot be uttered in vain.

J. C. H.

HERSTMONCEUX,
New Year's Eve, 1847.

SHADES OF THE DEAD.

REPRINTED FROM THE ATHENÆUM FOR 1829.

SHADES OF THE DEAD.

I.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

THERE is a kind of philosophy adapted to drawing-rooms, by which the character of all conquerors would be at once given over to unmingled and indiscriminate abhorrence. The shedding of human blood is thereby described as something so detestable that only the last necessity can justify it. We are told that men should visit with curses the memories of those who have given rise to contention and slaughter, and that the meanest peasant is more deserving of respect than victorious kings or triumphant generals. The heroic ideal is brought into contempt by the most ignorant; and the weak and the narrow-minded exult in their philanthropic wisdom, while they expose the real evils of what are called the military virtues.

Nor will any one question that it is a bold and weighty matter to be the immediate cause of pain and death to thousands. For though it might be hard to prove that the sufferings of the soldier are greater than those of other men, or that they are not overbalanced by the enjoyments of

activity and hope, yet he who begins a war does doubtless become the direct originator of many miseries. But what great good was ever achieved for mankind without accompanying sorrow? The greatest benefactor of the world, the teacher of truth, can hardly accomplish his task without uprooting some old sympathies, and disturbing the minds which he enlightens. In the education of an individual, his will can be strengthened only by subjecting him to rude and severe trials; nor can any great national revolution be brought about, which shall not give pain to many. We must judge the leader of every important change, with reference to the thought which guided him: we must see whether the shock, the excitement, the exaltation of his name, the pride of transitory victory, were the objects for which he was willing to subdue the immediate impulses of charity; or whether he regarded the innovations and contests and bloody triumphs, as evils necessarily attendant on a higher and more lasting end; misfortunes as much as possible to be diminished by a wise man, but for the avoiding of which no effeminate timidity should induce him to sacrifice a great object.

This will not justify such a conqueror as Napoleon, who had no other than a personal purpose, and who was willing for the attainment of it to crush whatever was most valuable in Europe. But it will serve as a defence for the general

spirit of Roman enterprise, for the conduct of the Spaniards in America, and of the English in Hindostan. And in truth, if we are to lop away from the existing culture in Europe whatever has been gained by the results of conquest, we should leave but a meagre and decaying stem. For how large a portion of the character of Christendom may be traced to the Roman and the Teutonic domination! And scarcely has there been a polity able to save any nation from sinking into a horde of savages, that has not been founded on a conquest. Conquest has been the great instrument of almost every revolution that has improved the world; and we in England have especially little pretence for denying its beneficial results. The Celtic barbarism was unable to advance human nature beyond the point at which Cæsar found it in Britain; and the Romans brought to the country laws, arts, and Christianity. The institutions had decayed; the national character was weak; and we were strengthened by Saxon blood and youth. But the nation remained apart, and hardly at all connected with the other portions of the Christian commonwealth; and the Normans, while they introduced their superior refinement and their riper chivalry, became a bond between England and the rest of Europe. All these co-operated to one end; and that was our actual England.

The oriental war waged by Alexander the

Great would have come close in the eyes of every Greek, had it stood on no other ground, to one of direct self-defence. It was the prolongation of a contest which had endured for many generations, and in the course of which Greece itself had been twice ravaged by hordes of Asiatics, and its fairest city made a spoil. The Grecian patriot, nourished from his boyhood on the Homeric songs, and accustomed to hear the names of Miltiades and Themistocles as the greatest glories of his country, and of the oppression of the Ionian cities as the chiefest wrong done to a free people by barbarians, could scarcely conceive any relation between Greece and Persia but that of deadly hostility. A peace was then no more than a truce, a temporary interruption of that warfare which was the natural condition of all countries not bound together by a common language and worship.

The wealth indeed of the Asiatic satrapies, and the factious divisions of every city, which made the losing party seek for assistance even from the enemies of his race, brought about some change in this state of things. The neighbouring peril of Macedonian predominance led the greatest of unsuccessful statesmen to receive from the ministers of Darius the money which might enable him to resist Philip. But the laws of political society, and the circumstances of the world, were stronger even than the will and intellect of Demosthenes,

who opposed himself and the fame of Athens against a power, to which Phocion, taking calmer counsel, resolutely submitted. A man of genius, King of Macedon, was necessarily leader of Greece; but let it not be forgotten that, by the same necessity, Greece, having a leader, was conqueror of Asia.

The knowledge, cultivation, and energy accumulated by free institutions, by traditionary religion, by philosophy and the arts, within the circling seas and mountains of the Hellenic land, must have overflowed on the surrounding countries. Without the aid of Philip or Alexander, bands of mercenary soldiers, intriguing politicians, and ambitious chieftains, would have torn the empire of Darius, and made the language and the thoughts of Southern Europe familiar in the palaces of the Eastern satraps. The methodized and accomplished mind would have found its way to the barbarian thrones, with a current as sure and perpetual as that which pours the waters of the Danube into the sea. But the supremacy of a monarchy was necessary to give singleness and concentration to the efforts of the many jealous cities. Greece needed to be split into numerous republics, that it might put forth the first bright fruits of human cultivation; but the hand of a kingly leader was required to gather and to spread the seeds on the banks of the Orontes and the Nile. This was the office of the King of Macedon.

Demosthenes failed in his opposition to it and him; for the time had come when mankind could gain no more by the continued independence of Thebes or Athens. Democracy had done its utmost for Grecian culture, and thereafter could only be mischievous in popularizing and enfeebling the civilization which it had in many respects advanced. The internal ministry of Greek activity was nearly at an end; and to make it available for the world, a leader was required with a more stable and unquestioned title than the vote of a populace, or the influence of one among many co-ordinate commonwealths, could possibly furnish. He was to be of Grecian race and language; for he was to guide men of that race, and to spread abroad the rich nourishment of that language. It behoved him to be captain of all Greece; for he was to go forth as its representative: and he needed at the same time a support other than the Peloponnese or Attica could supply; for amid envies, factions, and revolutions, that would have been physically inadequate. Above all, it was necessary that in soul and talents he should display whatever either of thoughtful or heroic power the philosophy of the wisest schools could call forth and cherish in human nature; for to mankind and to posterity he was to present himself as the impersonation and champion of the highest culture of that country, which nothing but its moral superiority

could entitle to civil predominance. All this was necessary; and it all existed in Alexander.

Supposing Greece to have been freed from those inward distractions which nothing but Macedonian guidance could have allayed, it would have been able, by a succession of various impulses, to rend, to seize, or to mould large portions of the Persian empire. Alexander had been educated between Philip and Aristotle, and looked to do more than this. A hundred teachers, innumerable statesmen and warriors, a noble traditional religion, the most wonderful artists that ever existed, many pregnant varieties of polity, had made the country of his fathers what it was, and therein had given him the means he was to employ. The broad and barbarous East was spread before him, full of tyrannies old and new, decayed institutions, oppressed races, undeveloped powers, and in these, and in the hopes of the vulgarest Greek, a common man might have found a mighty object, without bestowing on them any deep reflection. But beyond fame and domination, the ends which the very circumstances almost pointed out, and which were at all events proclaimed by the hopes of the populace, and by the names of Pausanias and Xenophon,—beyond these, Alexander found in himself an end higher and more permanent; for he was born with unequalled capacity; and his mind was the complete outward result of that method in thought, which

has given their godlike stations to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

He was the man of Greece, and was to impress on the continent of Asia not only the skill and valour of his country in the field, but also its reverence for religion, and its creative power in the arts, and in moral and political wisdom. He knew that his mission was nobler than, as a chief of free companions, to plunder and lay waste, or, like an oriental conqueror, to trample on all previous rights, institutions, and convictions, and substitute for them the grim and solitary idol of his own supremacy. He went forth to conquer indeed; for by the sword alone could the despotism of the sword be broken: but he went also to raise up, to guard, to renew, to cultivate; and, first clearing away with his iron engines the hard successive strata of former tyrannies, to lay bare to the sky, to water, and fertilize the soil beneath, to permit the secret seed to grow, and to mingle with it many new and some exotic germs. That this is neither dream nor fable, that Alexander was neither a madman nor a ruffian, nor an adventuring knight, would have seemed obvious from all his history. But unhappily he left no commentaries behind him; he had no Thucydides or Livy to chronicle his greatness; and his memory has remained only to excite the wonder of the crowd, the detestation of pseudo-philosophers, and the admiration and reverence of a few retired students.

The first year of Alexander's reign was no more than a loud and complex overture to his after life. His only object seems to have been to subdue and awe the invaders of his kingdom, and the rebels against his federal authority, so that he might begin his great eternal enterprise with the utmost possible rapidity and effectiveness. He performed a series of exploits, which, if truly narrated to us, were sufficient to have placed a Roman consul on a level with Camillus and Scipio; but they were merely the transitory and stormy dawn of that day, which brought the great luminary of Greece from its rising on the Thermaic Gulf till it set on that of Persia.

The first recorded deed of the Grecian enterprise is singularly consistent with the purpose of the whole expedition, and with the education and character of Alexander. He visited and honoured the spot with which tradition had associated the names of Homer's heroes, and his local descriptions. He had been taught through all his boyhood to delight in lays, which, besides their poetic value, and their relation to the tendency of his mind as a king and captain, had the merit of recording a portion of the great struggle between Europe and Asia, and of displaying in the brightest light his noble ancestor, the swift-footed and god-descended Achilles. All history announced that these poems were the lovely flowers of that Asiatic Greece, which now lay helpless

and enslaved under the sceptre of the great king, and which Alexander was about to liberate; and they were thus in every way the work naturally pointed out to be the manuals of his education. The strength of their influence over him was shown by his first proceeding on the soil of the Eastern continent. By performing religious rites on the plain of the Troad, he publicly put away from Macedonia the character, which it bore in the Homeric times, of a barbarous country, apart from Greece, and sending forth its chieftains to combat in alliance with the Asiatics. He who sacrificed at the tomb of Achilles, and made the Homeric works his daily study, constituted himself the representative of the Hellenic mind, and the champion of its cause; and when we know that he went to battle with a shield preserved from the days of Agamemnon borne before him, it is not easy to avoid the fancy that those ancient kings and warriors, whose memories he had celebrated, and who live for ever so brightly in the songs of the heroic age, moved round him and before him from the plain, the mounds, the rivers, and the sea of Troy, to the hills of Bactria and the banks of the Indus.

But in how different a spirit from that of the traditionary ages did he make war against his enemies! It was his aim to found a larger polity, embracing an immeasurably greater variety of circumstances and habits, and acting by a more

complicated mechanism, than Grecian statesmen had before conceived. And how uniformly therefore and earnestly did he, conqueror and innovator as he was, and creator of a fresh epoch in the history of the world, how constantly did he seek to find old foundations for his new establishments! how abhorrent was all his system, a far more benevolent and enlightened one than any before imagined, from the attempt to root out and desolate the old convictions of mankind He sought to strengthen men's belief and hope in their social condition, to put life into the heart of the world, and to substantiate in a political body the subtle and potent spirit of the highest philosophic culture. He did not enslave, massacre, or plunder: but, wherever he subdued men, he was ready to respect their human nature. Wherever he found any vestiges of ancient law and order, he zealously restored them; wherever any religious faith, he also did worship to the gods revered by his subjects; wherever skill, valour, industry, he encouraged and rewarded them; wherever open enmity, he met it, overcame it, and then forgot it. To pursue the footsteps of this wise and accomplished genius, would require a comment on every action of the busiest of lives, for ten pregnant and unexampled years. But there is a unity of purpose in a great man's conduct, which we may comprehend and admire, without illustrating it by all that his life

would furnish for its display. And in the history of Alexander, above all, it is evident, that he had made for himself a generous and permanent scheme of policy, scarcely, as it seems, to have been learned from Aristotle, and certainly opposed to the views of the democratic writers of Greece.

He acted differently from almost all the conquerors of whom he could have read, and differently from those former heroes of legendary song, who probably were the ideal of his personal feelings. For in him was blooming the latest ripeness of Grecian thought; and he who sacrificed to Hercules, Achilles, and Bacchus, and exceeded in war their traditionary exploits, was also to show forth the practical results of whatever laborious knowledge and profound meditation of human affairs his country could glory in. Therefore, instead of finding in him a wild and reckless adventurer, caring only to outstrip the hurricane, and, like it, to lay waste his path, we see in Alexander the severe judge, the benignant fosterer, the man who delighted to pause in his career of humbling subjugation, and recreate the world with more than kingly generosities, with the rites of a beautiful worship, and the shows and splendours of poetry,—the creator of cities in the solitude, and of commerce in the barren haunts of robbers.

There are other conquerors, to whom genius equal with his has been popularly attributed, but between whom and him an essential difference is

observable. The talents which have been shown by some vulgar modern captains, are all displayed in the means and mechanism they have employed: their object was utterly poor, low, narrow, and personal, that of the meanest and weakest-minded of men. The ingenuity and boldness of Alexander in pursuing his end were not inferior to those of any recent idol; but his vast, his unapproachable superiority was in the greatness of that end itself. Others, with vigorous faculties and large means at their disposal, have endeavoured to lessen and compress whatever they came in contact with, that it might be more suitable to the intrinsic pettiness of their purpose. They have sought, for instance, to cut off from society the action of many of its chief springs, such as religion, or historic remembrances, or the possibility of personal independence, to enfeeble and beat down the world till it should lie like a crushed and blotted mantle beneath the feet of him who has slain its wearer. Alexander habitually cherished and invigorated whatever feelings and thoughts he discovered in any nation; his mind even went beyond what moral energy the world contained; and he aimed at increasing it on all sides by the wise arts of the statesman, and of founding on it the power that should govern an immeasurable empire.

But it may be replied, in all this Alexander failed. And indeed the reality was far below

the thought; for, if the world would conform itself to a great idea, we should see the mound of primeval Eden opening out until it became the only limit of the globe. But, in the measure and fashion in which earthly affairs will yield and assimilate themselves to the conceptions of genius, the design of the Macedonian conqueror was realized. Shall we say that nothing was done in the stir and loosening of all the roots of thought designedly produced by these wars and this policy? Did not civilization gain anything, when the world for the first time saw a general improving all that he subdued, rather than enriching himself by his appropriations? Can that language, of which the very vocabulary has more of wisdom and poetry than the literature of other tongues, have been communicated to vast regions, and have taught them nothing? Or what shall we say of the many cities, the fair posterity of Alexander, surviving when the blood of his offspring had passed away, and preserving so many centres and radiating points of knowledge; of the soul of Greece inhabiting and informing a new frame on the borders of the Nile, when it had ceased to find a resting-place on the banks of the Ilissus? Or can the result have been contemptible of that mixture and inter-communion of the old polytheisms, which, by taking somewhat of its peculiar character from each, and weakening the exclusiveness of the hold of all over the minds of

nations, was probably a great and necessary preparative for the reception of Christianity?

We know not how far the story of the Macedonian meeting with the high-priest of the Jews may have been altered by the vanity of the people through whom it was transmitted, or adorned and rendered wonderful by the talents of Josephus. There is something so impressive in the image of the young conqueror, covered with the dust from the shattered walls of Tyre, bending to the name of God, and proclaiming that his minister had appeared to him in a vision, that every one, but for our modern dread of the marvellous, would incline to believe in it. There appears no reason for denying that a spirit like Alexander's, intent, far-seeing, and imbued with the highest revelations of a religious philosophy, may so have brooded among his native hills over the fields that lay open to his enterprise, and the truths which he had learned to revere, as to pereeive that, much as he might do for the world, the circle of its moral capacities would yet remain unfilled,—that the unity of God could hardly be made by him to supplant the anthropomorphic polytheisms of the nations; and a shaping imagination would then have naturally impersonated, in the form of a celestial instructor, the truth which no one, but by the fore-knowledge of faith, could then expect to become popular. This may have taken place in the mind of a pupil of

Aristotle; and the supposition will explain the reverence and awe of the young commander for a priest presenting himself as the teacher of that great principle, which was unknown beyond Judea to any but the wisest masters of science, and their most favoured pupils.

The legend, even if legend it be, is at all events remarkable, as bringing together the representatives of the two greatest moral forces then existing in the world, of Grecian thought and Jewish religion. The two afterwards allied themselves in the Egyptian city of Alexander, and conjointly gave a powerful impulse to the mind. Their perfect conciliation and union remained to be effected by Christianity.

Whether this last great consummation was in any way promoted by the influence exercised by the Grecian conquests on the Heathen modes of belief, is a difficult and perilous question. Most persons will probably think that there is much of mischief in all similar speculations, and will, it is to be hoped, at the same time maintain that Alexander is not to be judged by what we can discover of the distant consequences flowing from his deeds.

It would be melancholy indeed if any theory as to the evil results of a great man's actions, when those themselves were evidently generous, arduous, and the fruit of noble conceptions, should be allowed to rob Fame of her children,

and human nature of its loftiest examples. Shall the praise of courage, gentleness, endurance, magnanimity, and zeal in high purposes, perish, because a man who died before he had reached the middle term of life, could not complete the largest design that ever animated a statesman or general? Or shall we consider but as a mad adventurer the soldier whom Aristotle advised to treat the conquered as slaves, and who preferred the far more difficult and less glittering attempt to make them subjects of a temperate rule and citizens of a legal polity? the young and chivalrous leader, who, when the wisest minds of Greece could perceive no radical distinction between nations, but the broad difference of Greek and barbarian, studied, comprehended, and turned to the advantage of all, whatever was valuable and characteristic in each of twenty races. We may measure the importance of his life by the permanence of Grecian influence in Asia till all was swallowed up by Rome; and the loss sustained in his death, by the confusions and agonies of empires which succeeded his domination. He perished, having lived scarce more than thirty years, still meditating on his death-bed mighty designs for the future, and leaving behind him as his trophy the noblest empire that ever existed. The funeral games that celebrated his decease, were contests for kingdoms; and the mantle of the Macedonian soldier was divided into the imperial robes of many monarchs.

II.

JOAN OF ARC.

FOUR hundred years ago the English had very nearly done to France and to England the immeasurable injury of conquering that nearest and most powerful of continental nations. The nobles of the two countries had displayed alike the most brilliant courage and the warmest patriotism. The energy of the Commons of our country had inclined the scale to the side of the islanders; and neither the chivalry of France, nor its middle classes, nor its Church, had any help for the affliction of the land. That which princes, knights, burghers, and prelates could not do, was done by a peasant girl, who knew not her letters, and had gained her bread by the labour of her hands.

On the borders of Champagne and Lorraine was the hamlet of Domremy, attached to the village of Greux. The country around was rich in forests, meadows, and rivers; and the peasantry who inhabited it were frequently disturbed by the neighbourhood of war, and from the vicinity of the Burgundian power were violently split into favourers of the contending potentates. In Domremy, which was attached to Charles and France, was a cottage, occupied by the family of a poor farmer, whose name was Jacques D'Arc, and that of his wife Isabel. They had three sons and two daughters, of whom one was Joan.

The child was early noted for a tranquil, meditative, and charitable disposition. She learned from her mother the three great elements of popular Christianity, *the Lord's Prayer*, *the Creed*, and *the Ave Maria*. By her too she was instructed in all she knew of religion. Public prayer and private confession were the only parts of it in which she was aided by the priest.

She became skilful in the womanly works of sewing and spinning, and, when a child, accompanied her father and brothers in the rural labours of weeding and tending sheep; and, while still very young, was employed in guiding cattle to pasture, where they might be safe from the search of the wandering soldier. She was noted for a bashful quiet which restrained her from frequenting the street of the hamlet. She sometimes played in the fields with other children, and sometimes sang at the village merry-making, but scarcely ever danced. From these occasions of pleasure she loved to retire to the church, and was often found there alone with her palms joined, and her eyes fixed on an image of the Saviour or his Virgin Mother. She gave all she had in charity, and tended the sick of the hamlet, and would relinquish her bed to any belated traveller, and lie herself on the hearth. In her habits she was temperate and active; and she was beloved by all her neighbours, though she frequently withdrew from among them to the church. She delighted to

converse of God and the Virgin, and was constantly heard repeating to herself the snatches of her childish prayers. While in the fields, if she could not leave her flock at the sound of the church-bell, she knelt on the grass and prayed amid her sheep beneath the open sky; and when she found that the beadle sometimes neglected to ring the bell for complines, she promised him a little present for the better performance of his duty. Near Domremy was a chapel consecrated to the Virgin, and called the Hermitage of St. Mary. Thither she weekly repaired, and lighted a candle to our Lady; and she often left at irregular intervals her labours in the country, and went to this favourite place of devotion.

Half a league from her native village, and within sight of her cottage, was an ancient wood of oaks; and beneath it stood a beech, the most graceful and feminine of trees. This green and living memorial was invested with a traditional importance, and was called the Beauty of May, the tree of the ladies, and the fairy tree; beside it rose a spring salutary to the sick. It was the tradition, that fairies had of old haunted the tree with songs and dances; and under the boughs a knight had been seen to hold converse with one of these fantastic beings, who had all disappeared in consequence of the sins of their human neighbours. The priests were then accustomed to stand at Whitsuntide in the shadow of the beech,

to chant some prayers and read a portion of the gospel of St. John, the beautiful narrative and spiritual wisdom of the best beloved disciple. The gentry of the country sometimes feasted under the foliage, and encouraged the sports of the village children; so little of dislike or fear mingled itself with that ancient and religious belief: and yearly, in May, the youths of Domremy sang and danced at the fairy tree, around a rude and fragile figure made of leaves and grass, ate the cakes of their housewife mothers, and hung on the branches gay crowns and garlands of spring flowers, which they removed at night to their cottages, and regarded as in some degree sanctified by the poetry and devotion of those simple rites. In those rites Joan, when a child, partook, joined in the songs, platted her wreaths of blossoms, to suspend them on the boughs, or offer them at the image of the Virgin; but while the belief of the peasants, moulded by their desires, held that under the leafy shadow a root lurked in the ground, which, if dug for and obtained, would give wealth to its possessor, the simple piety of the child rejected the faith in any supernatural influence exerted for sordid ends.

So passed the maiden's earliest years. The wars of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs shook all the land; and the civil contention and lawless violence which possessed it, tended to innovate and pervert all ancient customs and

traditions, to destroy or corrupt whatever had of old been honoured. But the influences to which those of the time were so hostile, fostered in the midst of thes etumults the pure and energ eticsoul, which was to subdue the evil, and restore to France an undisturbed and national existence. The chapel-bell resounded over the meadows where the cattle fed, and through the wood of oaks, even when those fields were trodden by bands of soldiers. Under the loud voices of war still breathed the gentle whisper of lovely and pious tradition. The sun still shed its ripening light over the breasts of men; and patriotism and devotion grew in the human heart, against the nipping or uprooting influences of rapine, cruelty, ambition, and terror. Joan early learnt to long for the liberation of her country, and the re-establishment of ancient rights, and to hope for these only through the will of God. There was but one inhabitant of her village who favoured the enemy; and she wished that he, if God should so please, might die; yet, many years after her death, he spoke of her with esteem and regret.

That a virgin from Lorraine should deliver France, was an ancient prophecy, such as live throughout the world on the tongues of the multitude, and wait till some predominant spirit shall find in them the merit of its glorious achievements. This popular prediction foretold that the deliverer would appear from the wood in sight of

the cottage of Jacques D'Arc; and it was now to be fulfilled by his daughter, the poor herdsmaiden. When she was about thirteen, she seemed to herself to hear at noon, in her father's garden, a voice of God, '*to assist me*,' as she afterwards said amid her dying peril, '*to govern myself*.' She at first was greatly frightened; but she often afterwards heard the voice, which commanded her to live religiously, and to go into the part of the kingdom more peculiarly called France. The sound was generally accompanied by a great brilliancy in the direction from which it was heard. On being examined as to the visible form of the supernatural appearance, she said that she had been visited by St. Michael and the angels, and by St. Catherine and St. Margaret, whose diadems were precious and resplendent. She also spoke of having heard her dead brothers address her out of heaven. When the first of her visions left her, she wept because she had not been allowed to depart from earth along with it. The shapes that visited her were crowned and shining faces; but she saw neither limbs nor garments. They spoke in sweet and gentle tones. She knew not at first whether the beings that came to her were from heaven; but the wisdom and holiness of their counsel after a time convinced her.

When her conviction of supernatural intercourse had continued for four or five years, she stated to others that she was appointed by God to

raise the siege of Orleans, which was at that time besieged by the English, and on which depended the fate of the kingdom. After a year's complaint and solicitation, she succeeded in obtaining the escort of one of her brothers, of two gentlemen, and some attendants, who brought her in neat attire to the residence of Charles the Seventh at Chinon. She was at this time about eighteen, of a middle size, remarkable for that personal strength which was needful to her mission, but well-proportioned, with dark locks falling on her shoulders, a pleasing countenance, and gentle voice. Her rural habits and early sports had familiarized her with the practice of riding on horseback, and with the management of a lance.

It is memorable and beautiful, that, amid the rude comrades by whom on this long journey she was surrounded, the awe of her sanctity and enthusiasm was such, that, by the testimony of the very gentlemen and squires, she subdued and purified even their imaginations to reverence her virgin holiness.

Her history from this time forward may be told in a few words. She announced that it was her vocation to relieve Orleans, and convey the king in safety to be crowned at Rheims. She accomplished her task with a rapidity and energy which astonished Europe. From the day on which these great objects were attained, her soul appears to have been more and more disturbed;

and her successes, though still brilliant and wonderful, became more uncertain and partial. Before her nineteenth year she was made captive and thrown into prison. Her feet were bound by a weighty chain, which was joined to her bed and to a beam five feet long. Another chain was fastened round her slender waist. She was inclosed, from the day of her arrival at Rouen until her trial, in a cage of iron, in which she was fettered by the neck, the feet, and the hands. Three Englishmen slept in her chamber.

In the course of her long and harassing trial, she never varied from her assertion of the divinity of her mission, and the justice of her object. She clung to the use of male attire, as if feeling that she was bound to proclaim in her appearance the peculiarity of her vocation and character. And she only consented to abjure the crimes imputed to her, and to dress as a woman, on being commanded so to do by the clergy, in whom she trusted as the directors of her conscience, and the delegates of Heaven. When it was announced to her that she was to be burnt, she wept with piteous agony. When at the scaffold a bitter and calumnious accusation was read to her, she answered nothing, but asked for a crucifix. The last word she uttered was the name of the Saviour. She was not twenty when she died; and the last year of her life had been spent in prison.

So died a maiden, perhaps the most wonderful, exquisite, and complete personage in all the history of the world. To maintain this, it need not be denied that her persuasion of the outward appearance of divine agency was caused by a diseased excitability of the fancy. That such a disease exists, though not frequently, is most certain. But this very malady, which besieged the bodily eye with visions of the soul, was in her but the extension and exaggeration of what seems a necessary characteristic in every woman's faith: for it is probably a law of female nature, that it can have no belief but in that which stands to it in an outward relation. The condition of the human mind in that age, the thoughts with which alone a peasant girl could be familiar, and the tendencies of her own mind, all co-operated to prevent the pious and meditative child from questioning the reality of the beautiful shapes, whose whole true being may have been in fact projected into the external world from her own earnest soul.

There are among us persons, not a few, with some such fantastic and shaping powers. But they almost always become diseased and sentimental dreamers, or insane and unprincipled fanatics; both of them using that power of vivid picturing, which delights the passive mind, in order to escape from thought and self-consciousness, and from the steady realities of duty and

religion. The Virgin of Arc felt that the voice of God, which spoke within her, and which brought to her ears an outward articulation, came not to relieve her from the exertion of the will, not to supply an intoxicating excitement, not to cry down the conscience, but '*to assist her to govern herself.*' The calmest and humblest mind that guides itself by a principle, though but a law of prudence, and which therefore is compelled to self-sacrifice, though the ultimate object may be the lowest conceivable, is far more nearly akin to the spirit of the Maid of Orleans, than the restless tempers which pamper their feverish sensibilities with glittering cloud pictures and romantic stimulants, which are devoid of moral purpose, and live under no religious sanction.

The best account of Joan of Arc is in Mr. Sharon Turner's History of England during the Middle Ages. In the above paper his materials have been freely used, and sometimes perhaps his language.

III.

WYCLIFFE.

Happy moment was it for England when her Chaucer, who has rightly been called the morning star of her literature, appeared above the horizon,—when her Wycliffe, like the sun, "shot orient beams" through the night of Romish superstition.—WORDSWORTH, *Friend*, vol. iii. p. 28.

THE fourteenth century after Christ is one of the greatest ages in the history of the world. It is the beginning of the wonderful period which brought to mankind the revival of ancient learning, the invention of printing, the discovery of America, and the Reformation. That century however may well stand alone, and advance an independent claim to honour, as a time in which the human mind was most active and eminent; and in which Petrarca, Boccaccio, and Rienzi, the Black Prince, and Du Guesclin, Chaucer, Occam, William of Wykeham, Froissart, and Wycliffe, however variously distinguished, were so far alike, that they displayed accomplishments and virtues sufficient to ennoble the rudest and most melancholy page of history.

Chaucer, Boccaccio, Petrarca, and Occam were the representatives of that learning and thoughtful genius, which had recently burst out in such brightness over the world, and of which Dante and Aquinas had been, in the previous age, the most resplendent stars. Of these the two Italian

poets, and the author of the *Canterbury Tales*, filled a station which the world is even now sufficiently disposed to value, and exhibited the power of the imagination as gloriously as any who preceded or have followed them, joined with a degree of philosophic cultivation still rarer in the present time than their creative faculties. Occam is probably as good an example as could be found of the scope of that speculation which prevailed in the purely papal ages. In him, as in many others, it fostered very high endowments, and ministered in their service: he taught himself, in the studies of scholastic metaphysics and logic, to examine with jealousy the politico-ecclesiastical authority which the talents of Hildebrand had sustained and exalted; and he sharpened in the schools the weapons which wounded the papacy, and defended the imperial throne. Rienzi personated at Rome that democratic spirit, which broke out in other parts of Europe in tumults less memorable than his; and along with it he exhibited a fantastic and irregular historical madness, excited by the vague recollections of Roman splendour, and connecting him and the popular revolts with the intellectual energy and fine intoxication of learning, which may be discerned in many minds of the period. In William of Wykeham we discover one of the best specimens of the Roman hierarchy, with its mixture of worldly ambition and ecclesiastical magnificence: we see

him a statesman and founder of colleges, governing and giving permanence to what already existed, but as far as possible from adding anything to the standard of freedom and culture then existing in the world. Froissart, though a priest, was altogether animated by the courtly and warlike spirit of chivalry, and may be ranked with the hero of Cressy and Poictiers, and with the Constable Du Guesclin, as one of the worthies of that remarkable system. At the same time Flanders and Italy were busy and proud with their commercial greatness. And thus through several spreading branches, all connected at the root, the warm quick sap of intelligence and activity was circulating in European society.

Chivalry and commerce are both of them compatible with extreme deficiency of thought. Poetry is a mighty liberator; but it may live and rule amid entire practical acquiescence; it does not necessarily involve the boldness of the will. The scholastic philosophy, which has been so often pronounced worthless by those who have not studied it, and by those who have both studied it and stolen from it, was almost exclusively in the hands of churchmen, whom interest and subordination alike forbad to give it free way in religion or politics: and the popular rebellions were a mere blind resistance to immediate evils, unconnected with any principle of politics, morals, or religion, and only dashed, in the case of Rienzi's

revolution, with some sounding names, vague remembrances, and frantic expectations.

In the ecclesiastical establishments ought properly to have been found the defenders of the rights and laws of conscience, and of the untransferable power and duty to make the cultivation of our moral nature the business of existence: but it was more gainful and more flattering to ambition to persuade men that they were dependent for happiness, not on God, or on their own power of self-determination, but on the purchasable favours of the priesthood. Whence then was the voice to be heard, which should require the world to seek for the purification and strengthening of their minds by faith in God, and in that image of Him which belongs to us all; not by penances avenging on the flesh the sins of the soul, or by indulgences bought for a price?

It is to these things, and such as these, that men have always had recourse, in order to escape from the bitter necessity of self-examination and self-reliance. In Egypt and India, as well as Papal Europe, men find it easier to deal with their confessors than with their consciences; they substitute penance for penitence; and instead of raising their minds to the spiritual conception of God, which demands inward exertion, they fix their eyes on a wooden image, in the contemplation of which the higher powers of the soul may

be completely passive*. So it was in the fourteenth century through almost the whole of Europe; and with all the pursuits before enumerated to distract mankind, and the portentous obstacle of the Roman Catholic Church to impede them, it would have been hard to guess from what quarter a reform was to be looked for.

Erigena had questioned transubstantiation, the master sorcery which makes so many others practicable; and probably with no mean ability. But he seems to have written chiefly for the learned; and his labours and opinions had sunk from the recollection of Europe. Berengarius had much more recently opposed the same monstrous doctrine; but his memory does not appear to have lived among the succeeding generations; and his repeated retractions would at all events have thrown a dark cloud over his name. Besides these learned and speculative men, various little

---

* There is some immortal wisdom on this subject in *the Friend*, the longest published work of our Christian Plato, Mr. Coleridge. We do not now remember the page at which the passage we would particularly refer to will be found [vol. i., pp. 66—69;] but no one can go wrong in reading the whole book. It only requires to be more generally studied, to do more towards elevating and enlightening the national mind, than any work published among us for the last century and a half. We may add, that to read it with any profit requires considerably more attention and thought than is commonly given to novels and newspapers. These however do not belong to that small class of writings, of which it may be said, as of *the Friend*, that they are more to us than food or raiment.

congregations of the indigent and obscure were scattered over the dominions of the Romish hierarchy, and guarded in secret a holy flame, of which one spark was enough to call down on them the vengeance of the powerful. These, from the simple study of the Bible, unaided by general knowledge, and without the guidance of sufficient interpreters, encouraged themselves to cast away the belief of all that Luther afterwards rejected, and are said not even to have held the strange error of consubstantiation. Occam also, and several others, opposed themselves to the corruptions and usurpations in ecclesiastical discipline, without denying the dogmas of popery.

It may be remarked of these reformers, that either, like those last mentioned, they only resisted abuses obvious to the meanest and dullest, such as the luxury and profligacy of the priesthood, and their temporal tyrannies and avarice, evils which, though they had been remedied, would have left the principal mischiefs of the system, as regarded the minds of the laity, in all their original force; or that they only objected to some one corruption, such as transubstantiation, and that among the learned and with little courage; or that, like the Waldenses, inheriting Christianity in a sound and pure tradition, they clung to the faith of their predecessors, but without supporting the avowal of their faith on those grounds of clerkly knowledge, and with that force

of religious philosophy, which so fortify, when they do not attempt to supersede, the conscientious persuasion of the wayfaring Christian.

Of John Wycliffe, the father of the Protestants, none of this can be said. He addressed himself with equal boldness and equal skill to the instructed and the simple. He attacked both the worldly abuses of Romanism, and the less apparent, but far more deadly evils of the papal doctrine. He appealed alike to the conscience of the peasant, the practised intellect of the metaphysician, and the book-learning of the divine. And for these characteristics of his story, were it for nothing else, he would deserve to be placed high in the roll of English greatness, and to be studied with honesty and earnestness like his own.

There are two kinds of reformers, in both of which particular defect and error may be noted; those who address themselves to a class unfit to judge of the matters in question; and those who, from indolence, cowardice, or contempt, seek to retain among a few, in sealed reservoirs, truths of importance to mankind. Among the former are almost all who have sought to popularize science, and more especially philosophy, by bringing them down to the level of the vulgar, instead of attempting the slow and laborious, but worthy task of raising the vulgar to the heights of genuine and grounded knowledge. Among the latter have been many retired students, whose failing, it

may be remarked, is of much less ill effect than that of the others.

There have also been some, the real and lasting benefactors of the world, who have spoken directly to that which exists in all men, conscience and moral convictions, have sought to call these powers into activity, and to make them, as they ought to be and may be, the arbiters of the individual well-being of every one; men, who in doing this have yet laid aside none of the high and scientific titles of knowledge, and who, in making the vulgar wise, have sedulously abstained from vulgarizing wisdom itself into mere popular cleverness and empirical handicraft. Of these were Moses and the Prophets, and St. Paul; and of these, among the foremost of the uninspired, were Erasmus, Luther, and, in an earlier and darker age, our own Wycliffe.

The world has been often told, that deeply-founded and far-sighted wisdom is useless, that common sense and social experience are our only safe conductors, and that any loftier and larger knowledge than they can give, if indeed it exist at all, will unfit men for teaching the crowd, and prevent them from reforming actual abuses. Yet no error can be of general and permanent injury, without cloaking itself in the disguises of philosophy and abstract truth: and how shall these false shews, mimicries, and pretences of reason be laid open and dispelled, save by the power of

that genuine wisdom which they dare to ape? The man of mere common sense knows not the base on which stands the error that he would oppose; and, himself a thing of shadow, he fights with the shadow which, by intercepting the light of heaven, it casts along the soil; he would chase it away with the glimmer of his lantern, and does not perceive that, only by uprooting and overthrowing the tower, can he destroy the dim and fantastic image. Moses, who confounded the magicians of Pharaoh, was wise in all the learning of the Egyptians; and the pupil of Gamaliel became the great Apostle of Christianity. In the same way Wycliffe, the arch and accursed heretic of the Romanists, was, by the confession of his most malignant enemies, skilful above all men in the very arts which they esteemed the most, and in which they found their armoury for onset and defence. The canon law, the creation of papal Rome,—the law of the ancient empire, which, from being the mother, had become the handmaid of the canon law, and which in so many respects was a code of despotism,—the established metaphysics and logic of the times, which had been framed for the greater part by servants of the papacy, and which were apparently the most remote of all studies from the sympathy with the ignorant, and the practical and simple earnestness, so conspicuous in the life of Wycliffe,—the fathers, on whom the church establishment

had been most accustomed to rely,—all these were habitually studied by the patriarch of the Reformation, and mastered with an obscure and self-denying diligence, very different from the ostentatious ignorance of our modern brawling innovators. And how did he turn this knowledge to the profit of his great enterprise? Was it by clamouring against ancient authority, and against the scientific foundations of philosophy, because they were wrenched to the support of existing falsehood? Did he reject, for instance, that scholastic learning, by which transubstantiation, the great root of error, was commonly defended? No: he did not speak in the abodes of philosophic theology a language to which those meditative cells were unaccustomed: he did not address the practised dialectician, the metaphysical thinker, in the tongue of the market: but knowing that from clear and well-established premises no false conclusion could ever be deduced, he boldly applied to the healing of the wound the weapons that had inflicted it; and, by the use of the very terminology and method of the schools, he exposed how absurd it was *asserere quod sit accidens sine subjecto in hostia veritatis.*

He was indeed a man of massy, voluminous, and subtle knowledge; one who, with the intellectual sinews and skill to win the unbloody crown of the athlete, chose rather the sweat and toil and peril of the militant soldier. He had

all the learning and agility of mind required for the calm contentions of libraries and colleges, so fruitful at that period in power and worldly honour. But did he, like so many among his contemporaries, thus employ his talents? Where shall we find, in any age or country, amongst the lowest ranks of vulgar fanaticism, a man more zealous to encourage and animate the consciences of the poor and ignorant? Is it not admirable to see that he, the doctor and philosopher of the old schools, introduced into the church the practice of that diligent and, as it were, rustic preaching, so especially designed and fitted to enlighten the lowly mass of the people? Nor was this adaptation of his own great mind to the needs of the weakest a small sacrifice in Wycliffe. For it is clear from his writings that, if ever there was any one who delighted in long and difficult trains of reasoning for their own sake, as giving pleasurable exercise to his faculties,—who loved to busy himself in the building up and compacting of scientific knowledge,—he was the man. Yet through these fine and immense webs of reasoning, how lion-like does he constantly break forth with some bold, direct appeal to that moral sense, which is the great practical standard of truth! When we hear of the gay heroisms of chivalry, with all its showy enterprise and delight, it would be well to remember how far more of resolution and daring and humble self-sacrifice was hid

beneath a scholar's cloak, than ever beat within a blazoned surcoat.

It is not enough to love truth; we must also love the communication of it: and herein it is that Wycliffe differed from the sequestered thinkers, and those who dedicated themselves to a contemplative life. His mind rejoiced, if ever did a lover while he was winning his way to his mistress, in pressing on through a thousand labyrinths of laborious thought; his spirit exulted, if ever did any, in soaring to the high and etherial empire of divine conceptions; but he was too deeply filled with fervent charity to devote himself to meditation. And his was a charity very different from that which seeks to relieve itself as hastily as possible of the burthen of sympathy with others, which escapes as rapidly as it can from the painful aspect of suffering, by an alms that will feed the body, but leave the soul in its starvation. His charity "began at the love of man's spirit;" and the communication of religious knowledge was, in his conviction, "the best service that man may do for his brother."

His charity towards the poor was so incessant and powerful, that it furnished the readiest pretext for his calumniators, who accused him of enmity to lawful authority, and of favouring anarchy. How stood the case? The Church of Rome had elevated its own pretensions above the dominion of the state and the national law. It

maintained that church-property rested not on the same high ground, that ground consecrated by expediency, on which other property is based. It proclaimed that from it, and its necessary and universal supremacy, all authorities whatsoever were derived. It thus confounded the limits of law and of religion, and took the latter from under the jurisdiction to which alone it is rightfully subordinate, that of the conscience and the divine reason; while it brought the former into a region where it is an alien and interloper. Wycliffe, to oppose this tremendous evil, and acting like the true subject of a lawful state, showing himself, as he ever was, firstly a Christian, secondly an Englishman, announced that the power and property of the clergy was built on the same ground of law as all else relating to man's social condition; and in language bold indeed, and, if uttered in our day and altered circumstances, perilously daring, proclaimed that the law of God and the law of England were alone binding on the people, and that the lands of the clergy were given, not for their benefit, but for that of the laity.

It has been said that his language on this subject would now be dangerous; and for this reason. No one among us now pretends, or at least is for a moment listened to while pretending, that the property of the Church of England is held by a title different from that which guards all other

property. He therefore, who should now at length and vehemently urge that these possessions are bestowed for the general advantage, as if this were not the case with all possessions, would by implication be maintaining that they ought to be employed for the general advantage in some other mode than at present. And this, into whatever excess Wycliffe may have been driven by the fearful magnitude of the evil which then existed, he was far too wise a man to desire in circumstances such as ours.

It was his doctrine, that the Church, as a political and endowed establishment, is a part of the State, and not a paramount authority rising above it, and controlling it. So also was it held in the ancient commonwealths. But did Wycliffe believe, as was ordained among them, and as, before the personality of God was revealed, and when nothing but pantheism or polytheism was possible, had perhaps been rightfully ordained, that it was treason in any individual to dissent from the creed of the state? It may safely be answered, that he of all men was the great champion for the legal independence of every man's conscience, except on that universal reason, into the place of which no human institution may honestly dare to intrude.

At the same time it must be remembered that his whole life bears witness, how strenuous were his exertions to aid the efforts of all men towards the attainment of inward tranquillity and light.

To this yearning and activity his innumerable sermons and treatises bear witness, and above all the translation of the Scriptures into English, the great witness and imperishable instrument of that Reformation, to which he devoted his whole mind.

Of the lesser peculiarities of Wycliffe's character and habits, we scarcely know anything. But it is evident from his writings and history, that he was habitually under the influence of an austere and lofty enthusiasm, more steady and less passionate than that of Luther, though not with less of courage, faith, or wisdom. He seems to have been naturally of a grave and severe temper; nor was it likely to have been enlivened by the circumstances of the time in which he lived. His youth was passed in hard and rigid study: his early manhood was contemporary with a plague, one of the widest and most fearful desolations that tradition has told of: his later years were passed in perpetual and harassing conflict, in grief at the corruption that surrounded him, in peril of his life, in restless labour, in prayer and lamentation for the Church of God. Nor can we wonder that he presents himself to after times with little bloom upon his cheek, and no crown of flowers girding that thoughtful forehead, and shading those intent eyes. He seems to us one in whom all that allies the aspects of other men to the business and rejoicings and fattened indolence of the world, had shrunk away, and left

only the untrembling brow and look, the toiling brain, and lip kindled for prophecy, which became the minister of holy wrath, the champion of dangerous and providential enterprise.

Yet the name of this recluse controversialist and apostle of the poor, this threadbare priest and gospel logician, is for ever connected with much of what is most splendid and imposing in the memorable age to which he belongs. There was a greatness in his mission, and an equal greatness in his mind, which cast into shadow the petty distinctions of rank, and seem, as we read, to make the worldly glories, with which he sometimes came in contact, wither from before his face. It was much for a poor preacher and professor in that age, that, side by side and unreproved, he should stand with Percy the Earl Marshal, and John of Gaunt, with dukes of Anjou and Burgundy, with primates and legates. To him, and with the purpose that filled his soul, these names and genealogies were of little moment for good or evil: but strange as it may then have been that he, a mean man and despised, should be thus surrounded, it is far more strange to the thoughtful reader of history, it will be infinitely stranger still at the day of judgement, that the names of those prelates and princes and that of Wycliffe should ever have been written together.

By far the best existing authority for the character of Wycliffe is his Life published in two volumes by Mr. Vaughan in 1828. It is executed with sense, diligence, and talent, and conveys a great mass of information in a most agreeable and manly style. If Dr. Lingard be capable of blushing, his forehead must have been dyed with crimson while he read this work, and remembered the disgraceful, if not rather pitiable, account he has given of one of the greatest of Englishmen. We are sincerely anxious for the general and permanent reputation of Mr. Vaughan's book; and we would therefore suggest to him that in any future edition, (and many such we trust will be required,) he would do wisely in omitting almost the whole of his very long introduction, which, though learnedly and ably executed, assumes a ground already and adequately occupied. It is an excellent abstract, and might perhaps with advantage be published separately; but, filling more than half of his first volume, it tends to hide the characteristic purpose of his book; and no reader, with diligence to study it, will find any difficulty in obtaining abundant information on the subject of which it treats. In place of it we much wish that he had printed, in an appendix, the precise words, in all respects but the orthography, used by Wycliffe in the many curious and admirable passages which he quotes from the writings of the reformer. Modernized as they now appear, the reader is constantly fretted by the desire to know how much of the language is Wycliffe's, and how much Mr. Vaughan's. With some abbreviations in the body of the work, the whole might easily be comprised in one volume. The printing of the book, as it now stands, is unhappily very careless. On the whole however we regard it as a precious addition to English Literature, as a work written in an excellent spirit, and one which required and manifests a degree and kind of learned labour very uncommon among the boasters of the nineteenth century.

IV.

COLUMBUS.

THE result of the prolonged existence of the earth has been to extend the field of man's free and unfearing agency. This is the natural effect of accumulating experience.

The ancient world, so far as any single nation knew it, was a narrow island of solid soil, rooted to the centre, and overarched by its own definite firmament, while all beyond was vision, mystery, and the substance of a dream. Men looked from their fields and watch-towers into distant lands, as we gaze from some hill-side upon the vague brightness and mingling colours of the evening clouds and the calm ocean. The earth, of which they had knowledge, was encompassed by imagination and tradition with a thousand mythological kingdoms, with the cities of Meru, the golden bowers of Olympus, the gardens of the Hesperides glimmering through the desert, the icy habitations of Caucasus, and the banquet halls of Ethiopia. The Greek, who saw the stars arising out of the sea, might fancy that they had won their brightness from the glorious islands of Antilla or Atlantis, in which they reposed by day, and which were hidden in the distance from the eyes of men. Along the doubtful margin of the actual world, gigantic monsters and lovely

shadows walked half visible. Mighty lands, in the conception of the Christian, around the more certain sphere in which he dwelled, were peopled with the holy descendants of Seth, with the progeny of demons, with angels themselves, with loathsome fiends, and innumerable wondrous ministers of human temptations, or servants of saintly triumph. A broad belt filled with beings as strange as the shapes of the Zodiac encircled in the mind of every one the little region to which he was himself accustomed, commanded his awe, and repelled his inquiry.

Of the men who have dissipated these fancies, have fixed the clouds into solidity, and chased the shadows from the ends of the earth, the chief is Columbus. He accomplished more than any one else towards making us masters of the world on which we tread, and giving us, instead of yawning abysses and realms of vapour, wide waters for our ships, and lands for the city and the plough. He has rendered to the world an imperishable service. He stands in history as the completer of the globe, the conqueror who has added to the commonwealth of mankind unheard-of provinces and barbarous tribes. The barrier within which we moved with reluctant terror, like a lion in a circle of protruded spears, impetuous but fearful, was broken down by the Genoese sailor, and all around us was laid open to our onset. The mound on which so many phantoms

poised themselves, and displayed their wings, was by him uprooted from its foundation, and made to mingle with the sky. Thenceforward there was no limit to the action of any thought: no walls confined the arena of human enterprise, but those which the nature of things has appointed.

The kind of good resulting from the success of Columbus is peculiarly adapted to win the admiration of the present age. He enlarged and strengthened the mechanism by which we work, the material on which we employ ourselves. Could all knowledge of the man be destroyed, the great action of his life would be commonly held up as the most beneficial that any one could perform; for it dispelled innumerable visions, valuable only to men's fancies and affections, and incapable of being employed in the sphere of reality. It brought under our certain knowledge, and subjected to our activity, regions and faculties of nature, from which we have drawn unmeasured physical advantages. Nor was there anything even apparently accidental in this acquisition: Columbus always pointed it out as the certain consequence of his design. The bringing together of distant countries, the increase of wealth, the excitement of commerce, were inherent in that thought which occupied half his life. Was he then nothing else than such a man as may invent a spinning-machine or a steam-boat, as may originate great changes in the material possessions

of society, as may show himself earnest in opposing, and incapable of comprehending the seers of visions and the dreamers of phantoms? Did he resemble the idols of the nineteenth century? Or was he fit to be a great man of that age which produced the Reformation?

The greatness of that period did not consist, more than that of any other, in the neglect of mechanical and material objects, nor naturally involved it; but it implied the estimation of mechanical things as instrumental, and not as ends; and never but in this way has aught seminal been done, even in mechanical discovery. So was it with Columbus, who more than almost any man augmented the means of mankind. Look at his whole life, and all we know of his mind, and see what it is that distinguishes him. Not that he discovered America; for a fisherman driven to sea by a storm might have done this; but he is marked out from other men by the spirit in which he conceived his enterprise, and the objects which he proposed to himself. His intention was to clear up delusion, to solve difficulties, to disperse a thousand misty errors, to gain for European action a new and immense field; but his motive, and it is from this that we must judge the character of the man, was chiefly religious.

In his own letters, addresses, and narratives, that which strikes us as different from the writings of any other bold and instructed seaman, is

the constant appeal to religious authority. He looks forward with joy and confidence to the reception of the true faith by great countries, and to the acquisition for himself of wealth, which shall enable him to make another crusade, and recover the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the unbelievers. He asserts again and again, as the foundation of his enterprise, the trust and certainty that God had given him, in the hope of leading the way for Christianity to vast and unknown kingdoms, then pagan and blind; and, in addition to those sound and scientific reasons for the existence of a Western land, which no man in his own day could refute, and the accuracy of which was proved by his success, he supports his plan by a strange variety of arguments taken from religion and prophecy. He was a diligent student of the Bible; and from it he draws a hundred misapplied predictions. In his conviction the attempt to which he devoted himself was designed from of old by Providence; and he, as its selected minister, was watched over by saints and angels; and the mother of the Lord pointed his path along the waters. The cross was the ensign of his triumph; and his task was almost accomplished, when he had first displayed the emblem of his faith on the shores of the new world. Year after year, through all the changes from success and honour and delegated sovereignty to sorrow and shame, amid the vicissitudes of poverty

and disease, until his melancholy death, he was constantly occupied by thoughts of the vows which he had made in the freshness of his hopes, and which he had not been able to fulfil; his dreams assumed the shapes of heavenly messengers, and uttered to him discourses of providential warning or holy comfort; and when courtiers and adventurers were alike intent on the one object of enriching themselves in the colonies he had discovered, and then commanded,—when the priests who had been sent to aid him were busy in plotting against his power,—he meditated on the prospect of rescuing Jerusalem from the Mussulmans.

Columbus, the great overthrower of the fantastic and mysterious idolatries which were founded on the ignorance of mankind, the man who more than all others rooted the vague phantoms, that to the mind of every one filled the unknown earth, did not therefore want a childlike simplicity of faith in the truths of religion. He separated for ever the two worlds of the infinite and the finite, and cleared our knowledge of each by drawing a broad line between them. His genius enlarged and completed the domain of man's physical exertion; but his mind was still as true as ever to the existence of a higher region, needing not the patronage of courts for its discovery, and revealed to us by a mightier being than he. He explored and opened to the light of day the pro-

vinces of fancy and mythology; but woe be to the dishonesty of those who overlook that he left to the spirit its own serene kingdom, and bowed before its heavenly tabernacle! What he added to our material world, he did not take away from the immaterial; but while he excluded for ever from a part the shadows and superstitions of ignorance, he would have subordinated the whole to religion.

It is true indeed, that the religion of Columbus was not the purest Christianity, though exalted in his mind to a nobler faith than that common in his age. He sustained himself through a thousand conjunctures of uncertainty and danger by a trust in Providence, which was the most remarkable quality in his character. In him the latest brightness of Roman Catholicism displayed itself; and when in that form Christianity had reached, if not subdued, every portion of the world, nothing remained but the task of internal reformation.

But though the mind of Columbus was in many respects dark and weak, in this it was strong; in a religious hope and reliance, which taught him to refer immediately to God whatever of clear knowledge and new illumination he possessed. He felt himself marked out and appointed, with the other especial servants of Heaven, to perform a high spiritual work. The vividness of his intuition, the strength of his hope, he did not seek to account for from the accidents of his cha-

racter, or the scattered learning of his life. He thought that all was given to him for a predicted purpose, and that he was ranged among the patriarchs and prophets chosen from of old to do the work of Providence. The wise men of our day will mock at him for his childish credulity; but let no one despise this holy enthusiasm, unless he too has felt as strong a faith as belonged to Columbus in the distant and hidden, and as ready an energy in attempting to substantiate for all men that which before existed but in the thought of one; and, having felt these, can assert the possibility of their action without any mixture of humble piety. He was indeed in all things childlike; childlike in his humility, childlike in his confidence, childlike in the keenness and freshness of all his sensations; yet was it he who discovered, and by this very unfearing simplicity of heart, that new world which has changed the whole condition and subsequent history of the old.

The name of the discoverer of America would give us, if we wanted accurate knowledge, the conception of a vast and iron mind, trampling over obstacles, compelling kings and seas to yield to him, and realizing the cloudlike dreams of antiquity by an act of will as imperative and irresistible as that by which the ocean-god framed and lifted over the water the island of Apollo. He connects himself with the stern benefactors, the heroic shadows of antiquity, Jason, and the

warlike Bacchus, and the wandering Hercules. The fancy naturally conceives of him as a mighty spectral shape, leaning, like some old sea-phantom, on a gigantic rudder, and fixed for ever in dim and unmoving sublimity on some icy crag of Darien, with two worlds of water spread below him. A form remote, immense, and unapproachable, alone seems suitable to his fame. We cannot imagine him as a man beat back by daily opposition, impeded by the follies of the vulgar, checked and stung by the reptiles of society; and the act which revealed a second world likens itself in our thought to the simplicity and singleness of a creation.

But this bold, imposing, and right onward course, this unity and distinctness of action, can scarcely exist among men, unless in some false and melo-dramatic appearance. To struggle and agonize, to win a little way by much exertion, to be attended in our completest triumphs by the shame of some particular failure, or to be cut off in the midst of hopes brighter than any we have realized, is the fate of humanity. In Columbus we do not discover one great inspiration displaying itself in action as soon as attained, and leaving to him whom it favoured nothing for the future but to die in his renown. He does not delineate himself in history with a few vague shadowy lines, in which none of the half tints and finer lineaments of man can be discerned. But we see him

throughout made up of much greatness and some weakness, encompassed with obstructions so petty that one would wish him to blow them away like cobwebs, yet so strong that, giant as he was, he frequently could not escape from them; often baffled, and sometimes irritated by the despicable; and such, that his effigy ought to be moulded by the historian in gold, not virgin, but tormented into purity by the furnace.

We trace him with more than the interest which follows a hero of romance, through the doubtful and adventurous years of his earlier life. There is a meditative curiosity, which yearns to discover in what obscure and silent conjuncture of his vigorous manhood the idea of the world's completion by his means first dawned over his imagination: we can only know that his mind was built up into its strength amid the incessant affairs of Mediterranean commerce and war, by experience gathered for a vile price, and at the risk of life, by knowledge slowly and dispersedly collected, and above all by faith, the master principle, not to be learned from without, but drawing the life and strength and loveliness of all things to its own high inward service. With how many strange doubts and misgivings, and momentary temptations of a magical fancy, and recurring terrors at the very rashness of his own conception, must this great man have contended, whether in his narrow chamber, or on the unsteady deck of

some paltry bark, guided between Spain and Italy, with a crew of a half-score men, by him who was first to break the gates of the Atlantic! Image him in his little cabin studying by the flickering light of a solitary lamp, and to the sound of the winds and waters, the marvellous descriptions of Marco Polo, or the more pregnant pages of Scripture, in which with tremulous, yet confident expectation, he taught himself to read the memorable prophecies of his own enterprises, and evidences of his special selection. Image the poor adventurer, the son of the Genoese woolcomber, and a sailor since his early boyhood, wrestling for the sense of some dark saying, which he wanted learning to interpret, and finding its significance come gradually glimmering out of the page at the call of his earnest reliance: conceive him weighing, hesitating, trembling, turning to the stars an eye of hope, repeating a hasty supplication to the saints, reviewing in his thoughts the large and mixed array of testimonies on which he had employed years in building up his trust, resting at last with secure triumph in the certainty which God had given him, till again he turned away with terror to consider the inadequacy of his means for the fulfilment of his mission. Thus, by the effort of an honest imagination, let us paint Columbus; and we shall help ourselves to think what and how great he was.

The wondrous magic-lantern of history shows

him to us a poor wayfarer, accompanied by his son, and appearing on foot at the gate of a monastery to implore bread for his boy.. The tall and majestic pauper, with his ruddy cheek tinged by years and hardship, and bright hair so early turned to snow, must have presented a singular portrait of freshness and courage, battered, but not overthrown by misfortune. There was a spirit in his clear grey eye, which, while he discoursed to the Prior of Santa Maria de Rabida on his designs and convictions, would indicate that he had in himself that union of the heroic and saintly character required for so perilous an enterprise. And probably he who heard Columbus speak with the honest and earnest simplicity through all his life so peculiarly belonging to him, must have perceived a power in his words that softened the contrast, so strange to us, between the condition of the solitary beggar and the vastness of the thought which he announced.

O immeasurable scope of human genius! O mighty strength of trust in God! O miserable inequality of earthly fortunes! O mysterious complication of mortal power and weakness! how wonderfully are they all displayed in the story of Columbus! And how much of faith in the sincere and humble workings of the mind may we certainly derive from the contemplation of this minister of Providence a mendicant at Palos,—in his frail skiff the discoverer of the largest of

the world's continents,—at Barcelona received by kings with more than the honours of a triumphant consul,—then brought in chains from his own new world,—and at last, on a neglected bed of pain and death, carrying with him, amid his heavenly hopes, the consciousness of how noble a deed his life had accomplished, and leaving to mankind the inheritance of America, and the memory of another pure and creative mind.

V.

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.

IN this incomplete condition of mankind, while the germs of glory are as yet distempered with so many green and unconcocted humours, so that often the decay of an excessive age would seem to be mingled with the rawness of our immaturity, and the worm of death to be already feeding on the crude infancy of human existence, now desperate, as it were, of revival, it would be inconsiderate or fanatical to hope that the world can move by a serene and purely intellectual progression. It is with inward struggles that an individual obtains any great thought; it is with harder struggles that he becomes entirely and calmly master of it; and likewise it is only amid social contests that the world, regarded as one organized body, seizes a like thought, and with more severe and perilous contests that such a thought is made a consistent portion of the general mind. These contests, what are they but the wars and persecutions and violences which fill all history with the clashing of arms and the steam of slaughter? Hence it is that men have questioned whether the laurel be more proper to the conqueror or the sage, and that the palm has adorned alike the spiritual and the military triumph. The selected messengers of God ap-

pear not among us but in disguise; and we know not whether to hope for them beneath the glittering panoply, or the scholar's gown, or the raiment of camel's hair.

Thoughts are as mighty men, that in their infancy lie still in the cradle, (if not rather warring even then against serpents,) and in their old age become tranquil hermits, or lawful and established monarchs; but their middle years are full of strife and bloodshed. Such is the condition of human affairs, that an idea which has not yet given rise to social contention, is scarcely more than in embryo, and has not been born into the world. If a truth that concerns the body of mankind be weighed in the balance of even justice, the turbulent and tyrannous will assuredly seek to weigh down by his sword the scale that contains the gold; and by the sword alone can the wrong be remedied. So it was in the early ages with the religion of the pagan priesthoods; so with the philosophic culture of Greece, which broke forth, armed like its own Pallas, and overran the East; so with the empire of law, the inheritance of the Romans, and cause to which they ministered; so with Christianity and Mahometanism, opposed on this side and on that to idolatry; so, lastly, was it with Protestantism.

This doctrine needed from the beginning the defence of arms; for by arms it was to be tried. It was successfully supported in the field, and its

existence secured by solemn treaties; but in the Thirty years' War the vigour of its youth seemed for a time to have passed away. The contest was obviously unequal; and England, which alone appeared to have the power of authoritative interference, was now, as regarded the Continent, either indolent or impotent. The revolted possessions of Spain in the north of Europe were feeble and tottering; Henry IV. was dead; and the glory which his victories had conferred on the Huguenots, had been in some degree withdrawn from them by his subsequent apostasy. In Germany Protestantism was divided against itself, and without a sufficient leader; nor was it easy for men to guess from what quarter a champion could be looked for. The modern existence of Sweden was little remembered, until the appearance of Gustavus Adolphus.

Scandinavia was the seat of an ancient mythology, one of the wildest and most shadowy that has ever been conceived. The remoteness of the country, and the dreariness of the climate, seemed in the apprehensions of the rest of Europe to render possible the marvels of that tradition; and a race of fierce and gigantic warriors, bloodthirsty, reckless, and idolatrous, might be thought the appropriate inhabitants of an ill-known and snowy waste. It was easy and natural to dream of the dim phantoms of that superstition as still lingering in those bleak and obscure regions; but

it was difficult to conceive its people refined to the utmost degree then known in Europe, and mingling with skill and decision in the wars and negociations of southern kingdoms; nor would what was beyond all prudent supposition have been realized, but for the genius of one man.

Gustavus Adolphus, a king from his eighteenth year, lived till his thirty-sixth a life worthy of a great soldier and ruler, but insufficient to have placed his name among the foremost in history. These years of internal labour, and of war with Sweden and Poland, are chiefly remarkable as helping to the formation of that mind which speedily astonished Europe, as giving to Gustavus his knowledge of war and of human nature, and as enabling him to put together and perfect that mechanism of glory and power, in which he combined the wisdom of so many counsellors, the valour and conduct of so many leaders, and the discipline and stubborn courage of an unrivalled army. Yet during this period of preparation the rare greatness of the man so showed itself, that a sage observer would have announced, not virtue or capacity, but opportunity alone, to be wanting. A master genius was required to discover and call out the admirable talents with which Gustavus surrounded himself, and, above all, to produce and cultivate in his soldiers a temperance, a humanity, a religious morality, which appear a living and self-subsisting excellence more than

a passive subordination. Throughout these difficulties and perils he is rather equal to his after renown than to his actual circumstances; and we watch him with an interest proportioned to the importance of the hero, not to that of the drama or the theatre, whether he be discoursing to his senate of peace and war, and the columns of national greatness; or labouring at Riga, with a pick-axe in his hand, among his Dalecarlian miners; or contending in agility and ingenuity as the leader of an army against bands of Poles and Cossacks; or returning thanks in churches for victories, forerunners of Leipsic and the Lech; or displaying, as at Elbingen, the native simplicity and confidence of his character, when, having left his general and the burgomaster to sign the capitulation in his tent, he walked into the town as a visitor, apologized to the wondering crowd for the disorder of his dress, and stepping aside from their admiration into a bookseller's shop, asked the tradesman for a copy of Buchanan's poems.

In the year 1630 the King of Sweden began his German warfare; and assuredly no one ever more decidedly brought with him the characteristics of an agent of Providence, whether in the unexpectedness of the interposition, the seeming smallness of his worldly resources, the elevated objects at which he aimed, or the splendour of triumph that accompanied his first efforts. In a region dedicated of old to the iron attributes

and stormy renown of gigantic heroes and stern demigods, he was raised up, as if by the word of an angel, from the tomb of Vasa, a brighter spirit more gloriously embodied. Crowned as it were with the meteors of the North, he broke violently through the armed and seagirt boundary of that arena in which Protestantism was struggling for its existence, and rushed between his over-mastered religion and the enemies that were destroying it, setting at nought the superiority of numbers and riches, and the fame of unconquered generals old in arms, the manifold greatness of Spain, and the traditional awe of the Austrian Cæsar and of the Roman Pontiff. In two years he had marched from North to South of Germany, had penetrated from the Baltic well nigh to the Lake of Constance, had passed the Rhine, had entered in triumph Munich, the high seat of his chiefest enemy, and prayed in Augsburg, a century before the cradle of Protestantism, and still consecrated by the name of Luther. In fine, within that little space he had wrested victory from the greatest captain of the age, seized three hundred forts and cities, and shaken in Vienna the heart-strings of the empire; above all, had so confirmed and exalted the hopes of the Protestants, that the despised and oppressed religion no longer dreaded the frown of Pharaoh, or submitted to Egyptian taskmasters.

The great conquerors of the world have always

run their career either with extraordinary means at their disposal, or encountering feeble though boastful and wealthy enemies. Bonaparte had at his command the most compact of European kingdoms, with the greatest and most ingenious people, already used to bear their banners to victory, and absolutely subjugated to his will. Alexander and Cæsar (men comparable for military skill and personal accomplishment, though of widely different moral estimation,) brought discipline to war against rudeness, and civilization against barbarism; and Scipio and Hannibal wielded the powers of the two weightiest communities on earth. The warriors who have rapidly overrun large territories, if unsupported by these advantages, have seldom been opposed to countries rough and massive with fortresses, and loaded like the fist of an ancient boxer with threatening and ponderous destruction. In all these circumstances Gustavus Adolphus was distinguished from those of similar glory who went before or have followed him. The region from which he went forth to war was Sweden, a small, a weak, and frozen patrimony. The kingdoms to which he bade defiance were no other than the German Empire and Spain, Italy and the Indies.

If moreover the aspect of the time be considered, it will be found especially abundant in warlike excellence. Gustavus was not like Frederick of

Prussia, a vigorous and creative mind, standing alone with indisputable superiority in a comparatively barren age. The period of Gustavus was fertile, almost beyond precedent or later example, in men whose heroic characters and profound intelligence gave dignity to whatever cause they supported. Three, above all, were impressively eminent, and seemed to be governed by a destiny necessarily connected with that of their great antagonist. Tilly, Pappenheim, and Wallenstein were generals whose names stand out in history with a picturesque and definite brilliance, and a natural individuality, the most attractive and imposing. Pappenheim, though as young as Gustavus, was seamed with nearly a hundred scars, like a many-dinted sword of the most precious temper and admirable poise. The restless and burning Achilles of the Empire and Popery, his courage glowed like a furnace, and his impetuosity likened him to the wind. Of a wild and excessive spirit, he never could be cautious for himself; but aware of the importance of his cause, and deeply attached to it, he was as far from being over-rash for his soldiers; and heading them, Tilly was scarcely more careful, or Wallenstein subtler than he. He fell on the same field as Gustavus, and rejoiced in dying, that the enemy of his faith had also perished. The declining age of Tilly was united in the same cause with his early manhood. Bold and determined, he looked at all occurrences

and persons with an eye of clear, sullen, and unpitying intelligence. His religion was bigoted, and his morality austere; he had none of the dreaming fancies, the mystical affections, and wayward kindliness of the Germans; and recklessness and intolerance were in him resolve, and not as in the Spaniards passion. He too in his hoary hairs, and after a life of victory, was deprived of his long glories, and then slain by the arms of the Swede. The last antagonist of Gustavus, and the most remarkable, was the Duke of Friedland. He too was possessed of a potent and brooding mind, in the depths and gloom of which he found at last the doom of his own destruction. By temper he was more imperious and magnificent than almost ever was a king. He possessed immense estates, and a reputation in itself vast, and the more conspicuous, inasmuch as it seemed to contain the seeds of an illimitable superiority. He was confessedly unrivalled in the art of collecting and rapidly organizing an army; he had never been defeated by any opponent in the conduct of one. The unbounded profusion of his largesses appeared to have in them more of a careless condescension than of any warmer impulse. Above all, the strength of his mind is rendered impressive by its conjunction with the weakness of astrological credulity; and the deeply founded despotism and infinite ambition of his character shrunk and bowed before the predictions

of an Italian star-gazer. At last his fame and that of Gustavus, were brought to the arbitrement on the plain of Lutzen; and the Bohemian lost the victory, and the Swede his life. From the time of the death of Gustavus, an occurrence readily supposed to be glorious to the Imperialists, because it was more advantageous than would have been many victories, the fiercest longings of Wallenstein took apparently more consistence and a loftier flight. If we may believe the rumours and hints that have reached us, he marched resolutely forward towards the delusion of royalty, nor perceived that the shining vapour floated above his grave.

Around these principal figures, many others grouped themselves, worthy in less stirring times, and among less powerful spirits, to have held the foremost place. Nor did Gustavus attempt to oppose these formidable minds with a mechanism moved only by his own conceptions. His genius resembled that precious gem of Eastern fable, which uncovered to the eyes of its owner all the inferior jewels in the mines of earth. Feeling no jealousy of neigbouring reputations, he sought for, and drew around him a band of men fit followers of such a commander, Horn, Bannier, Torstenson, Duke Bernard, and, above all, the one whose name might well be the polar star to ministers of state, the wise Chancellor Oxenstiern.

The inferior means employed by the king of

Sweden are even more memorable than the nobler instruments; for they were more distinguished from their class, and more wonderfully improved beyond their first elements. His native dominions could permanently furnish but a small portion of the army required for garrisons and campaigns in Germany. And though Europe was then filled with hordes of mercenary soldiers, they were addicted to unmeasured turbulence and licence; and the pay required for the services of a small body would speedily have exhausted the resources of Sweden. In the formation, from these materials, of an army such as that which defeated Tilly and Wallenstein, the greatness of the king was the most eminently displayed. Rich governments supplied the wants of his opponents; and the devastation of provinces marked their course. It was only by the utmost lawlessness and cruelty of rapine, that the Duke of Friedland created and held together legions, as if by a spell. Gustavus was engaged in a religious enterprise; and the principles of his warfare were based not only on the nature of his design, but on that high and far-sighted prudence which can scarcely divide itself from conscientious wisdom. The discipline which he enforced was strict as that of Spartans, and moral as that of hermits; and as the camp of the Romans was a temple, so that of the Swedes was no less admirable for order, virtue, and devotion, than if it had been a place

holy to God. The contributions which were the fruits of his victories, relieved the subjugated regions from half the inconveniences, and all the horrors, of unsuccessful resistance. And thousands of rude and licentious soldiers accustomed to change their banners in every campaign, and to make each secession a pretext for plundering the country round their quarters, now, though commanded for the most part by officers whom no tie but interest bound to their general, were yet united in faithful and irresistible phalanxes by the stronger than astral influence of one man's predominant wisdom and heroism.

Such were the wonders accomplished by Gustavus in making and compacting the engines of his power. They never could have been done by any one whose ends were lower than sublime; for the design which occupies by a necessary retroaction modifies the means whereby we seek to attain it. But the aim of the Swede, even if it be regarded separately, evidently appears both lofty and permanent. He purposed to secure for Protestantism so firm an establishment in the Empire, that neither force, such as Spain has always been ready to employ, nor tyranny, such as that of the Imperial Edict of Restitution, nor atrocity, such as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, nor faithlessness, like the subsequent Revocation of the Edict of Nantz, nor all the wiles of the Papacy or violence of Roman Catholic potentates,

should avail to shake its firm foundation. Without this fearless and princely interposition, those sparks of fire from Heaven which had been scattered abroad by the censers of Wycliffe and Huss and Luther, would have been trampled and extinguished beneath the armed heels of royal persecutors and prelatical tyrants. It was the purpose of Gustavus to elevate the flame on an altar of rock, and collect its seeds in imperishable lamps. Nor is it a mean evidence of his splendid faculties and heavenly mission, that, when the hand which had tended the sacred light, and guarded it from the lovers of darkness, was disarmed and crushed by death, new champions sprung from his blood, and inherited his heroism; the impulse of his glory still moved his followers; and his spirit was with them from camp to camp, and battle to battle, till the liberties of Germany, the security of the possessions and rights of the Protestants, were established for ever by the peace of Westphalia.

The spirit in which the supporters of his cause fought and took counsel, was the better spirit of his nobler and more characteristic thoughts. The genius that guided him was something in his later years checked or degraded by aims of a personal, though large ambition. And this great soul departed from earth at a time when nothing remained for it, perhaps, but hopes less pure than those that had before inspired it, and the triumphs of selfish exertion.

VI.

MILTON.

ONE of the most remarkable changes in the history of the world is that which has substituted the action of circumstances for the influence of individual character. To questions whether this revolution be useful or mischievous, only the one answer can be returned,—that it is necessary. But omitting all discussion as to the political results of this alteration, we may yet observe that nothing can be more pernicious than to let it extend to the moulding of our own minds. For whether any man's well-being can be destroyed by adverse fortune (which almost all Pagan wisdom and example, no less than Christianity, negative), it is clear that the most favourable accidents can never secure it. Yet our education generally tends to turn attention, not on the virtues and accomplishments of illustrious men, but on the precepts left to us by them, or to be drawn from their lives, for advancing ourselves in society, and prudently governing our conduct.

It would therefore in our age be especially useful to set up before the eyes of men the portraits of the great minds which now exist for us only in their thoughts or actions, and to display them for the reverential love of later times in their living personalities, surrounded, as golden

statues in a temple, by unstained and sacred air. Such tasks are not dear to those whom profit or vanity has made skilful in bookcraft; and the attempt is thus remitted to workmen who want perhaps almost every quality required for success, but the earnestness with which they would willingly devote themselves to its achievement.

Milton stands apart from nearly all the men who hold a permanent place in the estimation of the world. With scarcely an exception, their memories are still, as it were, naturally joined to the affairs of society. Shakspeare is read perhaps less for his poetry, than for the number of practical maxims and sayings and descriptions of general application, which crowd his pages. Newton retains his place in fame by the physical direction of his pursuits. Bacon is crowned with both these diadems. But the fourth great name of England dwells aloft, and equally remote from the business of the day, and the studies of natural philosophy. The merchant cannot learn from him to grow rich. He has left no proofs to the mathematician. The man of the world can find in his writings no directions for his carriage in courts and assemblies. In the eyes of the present generation his political opinions are an obsolete fancy, his system of church-government a baseless dream, and his plan of education a grotesque rarity for literary museums. He is even hateful to many for his defence of regicide; he is distasteful to

more for his heretical doctrine; the works which employed the larger portion of his life are difficult and gloomy, and now half hidden by the rust and cobwebs of the two centuries which have introduced to popularity such different theories from his; his poetry, to persons who read for amusement, is far too massive and learned, and furnishes food little grateful to the majority of those in whose views his religion is not contemptible.

Whence then comes it that he is still spoken of as a bright and almost an awful spirit? It assuredly does not arise from the accidental conformity of a few of his opinions with those of some modern politicians. They employ his eternal name for their own low momentary purposes. They use a forensic lens to kindle from that sun their heaps of weeds, and so breed a stench in the nostrils of their enemies. But he spoke so little to the crowd, he lived so long ago, his faith was so sincere, and his morality so exalted, that he will never receive from them that cordial idolatry, which rewards their recent champions. He has lately been panegyrized by them in this country, as the Bible, when it was taken to Rome after the sack of Jerusalem, might have been applauded by some Greek adventuring rhetorician, who had looked for an hour into the volume. Nor can the reverence felt for him be explained by the religious frame of his longest poem. For some of our most admired religious authorities have declared

that the Rev. Mr. Pollok's *Course of Time* is superior to *Paradise Lost.* Pure poetry will not maintain an author in the thoughts of Englishmen; or Spenser would not be almost forgotten. There must be some cause different from all these for our national admiration of Milton; and it can be found in nothing but the dignity of his character. That, careless as the learned and the popular are becoming of such titles to renown, is still a claim on the sympathy of mankind; and so it ever must be, unless we shall sink into a horde, externally civilized, but morally uncultivated.

Milton was abundantly skilled in the dialectic art; he had a divine intuition into the logic of poetry; but he was not particularly remarkable, among men of genius, for penetrating and comprehensive intellect. This is very clear from his political and theological writings. His scheme of Government is that of a purely ideal commonwealth, and has the fault common to the greater number of such conceptions, that it never could be practised, except among beings for whom no government at all would be necessary. His opinions as to a Church Establishment are of an exactly similar description; and no imagination less powerful than his could have realized such visions to any mind. Nor could these phantom plans have obtained, in the thoughts of a nation, the living force necessary to their action, unless every man had been able to breathe into them

from himself a breath of existence as powerful as that with which they were imbued by their creator. But this could not be. The roots by which institutions hold to the minds of most men, and draw nourishment from them, are custom and antiquity, far more than the feeling of security, the love of order, and the reliance on acknowledged right, which influence the few thoughtful heads. Milton cut off these roots in himself, and nourished his theory by stronger and deeper ones, penetrating below the surface, into the reason and freedom of his nature. His plans are glorious manifestations of his character. But in politics no more than in poetry could he lay aside the austere and magnificent individuality of his mind, and think for others from a knowledge of what they are, instead of considering them as repetitions of his nobler self. He knew little of the tangled complication of modern society, of the reciprocal action of various classes, which have grown up and been sanctioned by centuries, of all the differences made by the increasing importance of property between the commonwealth of England and that of Rome. He saw, in his idea of rulers, the combined elements of a moral and a civil guardianship, resembling, but for their elective title, an old priestly aristocracy. The people were in his eyes a body whose freedom would best be secured by obedience to these governors; and he took but slight account of that great middle

mass of unripe active intelligence, which did not exist in the ancient world, but the power of which over civil affairs and literature is the most remarkable characteristic of modern times.

His political opinions with regard to circumstances are of little value as rules for practice. He did not belong to the age in which he wrote, nor peculiarly to any age. He saw no more of the subtle springs and interwoven tendencies of his own day than of any other. He would have walked as much alone in the time of Elizabeth, as in that of Charles. And though living in any period of public movement, he would have flung his gigantic shadow over the field of battle contested by dwarfish combatants; his motives would have been entirely different from theirs; and he would have stridden among them without belonging to either faction, though turning perhaps the victory at his will. His political treatises can teach the active statesman very little; but they are splendid and living evidences, for him who reads aright, of the freedom and earnestness, which were as necessary to the mind of Milton, as the air of heaven to the world of animal existence. They are more than this; they are memorable assertions of that possible freedom of human nature, which, though incapable of being made the broad ostensible basis of a government, must be more or less implied in every polity designed to hold together beings at all superior to the

brutes. In them he calls God and man to witness, that liberty is our natural inheritance; and, though not knowing or heeding that where it does not exist in the minds of men, institutions pretending to embody it must be hollow and dead, he is yet an inspired moral teacher, proclaiming that it is every man's first vocation to labour for freedom in himself, and his second to struggle for its recognition in the laws of his country. And thus it is that, where it was possible for Milton to succeed, there he was successful. He taught to all Europe that the death of Charles was not a mere violence of an aimless and criminal faction, but a deed which alone could make evident the birth and rigour of a new power, a hitherto unheard-of self-reliance among the citizens of a modern state. The execution of that sovereign, than whom a falser and more treacherous never existed, is now maintained by almost all men to have been both foolish and wicked. But in how different a spirit was it defended by Milton, from that in which it was treated of by the Royalists, who condemned it, not as a separate offence, but as part of a rebellion more just and necessary than any foreign war that England ever waged. And mistaken though he probably was in his defence of the English people, let us not forget how nearly the language and doctrines of that mighty pleading are akin to those of the Areopagitica, the first great proclamation of a prin-

ciple, which has now become the most familiar and most valuable inheritance of every one amongst us.

His views of church-government are indeed far more opposed to anything that could safely be practised, than his political theories. But we may draw from them at least the moral of the utter worthlessness of hierarchies and ceremonies, without our own co-operation. To Milton such aids were unnecessary. The ladder is needless for him who has an angel's wings. But he has taught us more eloquently than almost any man, that the very ladder of God will not enable the cripple or the sluggard to mount to heaven. In this, in all, he contends for the activity and freedom of the individual mind. It was the treasure which he unceasingly guarded; it was the citadel which he spent his life in defending; it was the faith of which he was the great apostle. And what though he overlooked the humble needs of the wayfaring Christian, who fears to stand alone lest he should fall; the time shall come when the meanest and the weakest will be lifted side by side with Milton, and feel that they are upheld by that inward and self-subsisting force, on which they dare not now rely.

Nor are his poems less remarkable than his prose writings, for the evidence they afford of the personal loftiness and concentration of his character. It was the glory of Shakspeare to make

himself master of the universe as it is; and on that account there is no conjuncture of affairs, no subtle variety of character, to which some passage of his dramas is not applicable. It was the glory of Milton to create for himself a universe of his own; and every line of his works shows us an instance of the employment of ordinary materials in relation to a high, internal, moral end. Shakspeare modelled out of his own pure metal a bright image of everything around him, and a thousand noble human sculptures. The great blind poet collected all that the world could supply of valuable, and, melting it into one rich Corinthian substance, cast with it a statue of himself, exhibiting man in his most divine form, and to be recognised by men as long as they shall retain their likeness to God.

Milton's independence of his age, and of all but the laws of his own excellence, is no less remarkable in these poems, than in his other writings and in his life. He was in faith a Hebrew prophet, and in knowledge and culture a Greek philosopher. *Paradise Lost* is the noblest mythological creation that ever existed. It does not connect itself indeed with the popular belief of any time or country; for Milton, of all men, was least able to throw himself into another set of thoughts than his own; and those that demand that he should have done so, and lament that his angels are not the angels of our childhood, nor his

fiends the devils of a puppet-show, forget that the living principle of Milton's being, his sublime and statue-like aloofness, must have been destroyed before he could have thus written. Conscience was the moving power, imagination the great instrument of his mind. For the sport of fancy, the agility of busy intelligencer, he had little propensity.

It is curious to observe how the general opinion has decided with regard to the relative merit of his poems. *Paradise Lost* is, by the consent of almost all, the greatest poem of England; while *Paradise Regained* is scarcely more familiar to the majority of educated persons than *Gondibert* or *the Purple Island.* The one which images the struggle and agony of the universe in the task of self-determination, which contains the gigantic impersonations of evil, and the disastrous rout of human hope, finds an apt correspondence in the breast of every one. But the lovely child of the old age of Milton, the serene proclamation of the power to conquer, the even and majestic triumph of tempted humanity, has perished from the memory of the nation, as completely as if it had been laid in the sepulchre of its author.

Until there is a stronger inclination to raise out of that oblivious dust what remains to us of his productions, there is but little chance that we shall think of erecting and vivifying the image of himself; yet around what retired student does so

calm a glory rest, as that which encircles Milton? From his age, so fertile in the greatest men, we look in vain for his compeer, and shrink from setting in comparison with him the perturbed spirit of Vane, the virtue of Falkland, slender and feeble, though pure as diamond, or the less austere morality of the pregnant and fervent Taylor. We see Milton surrounded by a conflict, for humble honesty the most fearful that can exist; but we see him passing through it triumphant. Unlike Hobbes, the cowardly sophist, who fled from England at her utmost need, he left the land which his education and tastes made dear to him above all others, and which he could scarcely hope again to visit; he broke away from a train of affectionate admirers, and the ennobling sphere of the old Roman greatness, and came to submit himself to the whirlwind by which his country was shaken. The days of a life which more lately bore the fruit of the *Paradise Lost* and *Regained* he employed in the toil of teaching, that he might devote his nights to the composition of treatises splendid enough to have dazzled a world, but that they were too lofty to engage the vulgar eye. In an age rioting with drunken opinions, he too was sometimes misled by a finer and more spiritual intoxication. But the man is untouched by the condemnation which lights on the intellectual error; his heroic, if not rather angelic, excellence remains undimmed, unapproached by

censure; suspicion dares not look his memory in the face; his name stands amongst us as a monumental pillar, elevated enough to be a standard for human nature, and of which stain or decay cannot reach the lowest stone in the pedestal.

He may have erred as to divorce; but it was not from the strength of sensual passion, or the weakness of conscience. He overlooked a thousand prudential considerations as to government; but from no want of reverence for the principle of law, or love for all that can maintain, purify, or exalt society. And if, in moulding his idea of a Church, he forgot that the limit which restrains may also secure and support, how glorious was the error, if the wretchedness of any error can ever by relation be glorified, compared to that of men who would compress and enslave the freest and the most self-sustained spirit on earth, even such a one as that of Milton himself!

Nor is he this severe and complete model, awful and holy, but, as he is sometimes described, scarcely at all engaging. The altar-flame, which burns on the sacred mountain, lighted also with a genial and kindly ray the low domestic hearth. He loved the country, and society, and cheerful books; and delighted in all the cordial elegances and delicate graces of life, as keenly as those, who far from being able to write the *Defensio Secunda*, have never even read it. There is all the simplicity and all the liveliness that good Isaac

Walton would have desired, in the glimpses that remain to us of his private life. We read of him inviting Mr. Lawrence or Cyriac Skinner to converse with him over wine, and thus to enjoy a pleasure, of which

> Who can judge and spare
> To interpose it oft is not unwise.

We hear of him composing an unrivalled poem in honour of a young lady, at the request of his friend, Mr. Henry Lawes. And she, the heroine of *Comus*, by a singular felicity, after the glory of being celebrated by Milton, achieved the greater glory of protecting Jeremy Taylor. How familiarly does he seem to have conversed with Elwood and his other friends, about that which men are often jealous of seeing handled, the progress of his writings! How profoundly did he love the wife to whom he addressed that saintly sonnet! And how beautiful, calm, and clear are the hints that remain to us of his latter days, when, wrapped with a coarse grey coat, he sat in summer evenings among the flowers at his door, and rejoiced in the fresh air of heaven; or when, more solemnly suited with black, he was placed in a room hung round with faded green, and bent his pale sightless countenance over the organ on which he delighted to play! And amid the smoke and fury of the fiercest political battle waged in England since the Reformation, with what exquisite sweetness and modest sublimity does he

recur to the romances, in which, as a boy, he had looked for amusement, and from which, by the necessity of his nature, he had drawn instruction and moral nourishment.

He had scorn indeed, and vehemence for all the baseness that met his eye. But let us not forget that the meekest man who ever lived, drove the money-changers from the temple with a scourge, and threatened to purge the garner with a terrible and destroying fan.

VII.

BURNS.

THERE are two frequent lamentations which might well teach us to doubt the wisdom of popular opinions: men bewail in themselves the miseries of old age, and in others the misfortune of an early death. They do not reflect that life is made up of emotions and thoughts, some cares and doubts and hopes and scattered handfuls of sorrow and pleasure, elements incapable of being measured by rule, or dated by an almanack. It is not from the calendar or the parish-register that we can justly learn for what to grieve, and wherefore to rejoice; and it is rather an affected refinement than a sage instinct, to pour out tears in proportion as our wasting days, or those of our friends, are marked by the clepsydra. And even as old age, if it be the fruit of natural and regular existence, is full, not of aches and melancholy, but of lightness and joy; so there are men who perform their course in a small circle of years, whose maturity is to be reckoned, not by the number of their springs and summers, but of their inward seasons of greenness and glory, and who by a native kindliness have enjoyed, during a brief and northern period, more sunshine of the soul than ever came to the clouded breast of a basking Ethiop.

Yet the many men of exalted genius who have

died in early life, have all been lamented, as if they had perished by some strange and unnatural chance, and as if He, without whose will no sparrow falls to the ground, only suspended his Providence with regard to the eagle ministers of Truth and Beauty. Happy indeed, thrice happy, are such beings as Sophocles and Titian, in whom the golden chain runs out to the last link, and whose hearts are fed by a bright calm current, until they fall asleep in a fresh and blooming antiquity. But happy also were Raphael, Sidney, and Schiller, who accomplished, in the half of man's permitted term, the fulfilment of their aim, and gained sight of the rising stars, when others were still labouring in the heats of noon. Happy we may even call the more disturbed and incomplete career of Byron and Shelley and Burns, who were so much clogged by earthly impediments, and vexed with mental disease, nourished by the disease of the material frame, that death would rather seem, if we may humbly speak what perhaps we but ignorantly and wildly fancy, a setting free to further improvement, than a final cutting off in the midst of imperfection.

Burns died at the middle age of life; but had he attained a century, his fame could not have been more sure and permanent, and scarcely more extensive than it is. And even as regards his own mind, it is hard to discover what added years were likely to have given him. The men to whom

length of days is important, are those the sphere of whose action is yet incomplete, or those whose faculties are not yet wrought into maturity. We see around us some whose powers are still inadequately developed, and therefore incongruous and unbalanced, whose minds are evidently raw and turbid, but full of promise. These, if any are to be justly pitied for what befalls them on earth, deserve commiseration when they perish by an early fate. And again there are others whose perfected powers seem not to have found their worthy object, but to be grasping at emptiness; and for them there is a noble future, which it is hard that the tyranny of the grave should turn to lamentation. But Burns was in neither of these classes, neither among the luminaries that have not filled their orb, nor among those that have not moved along the whole of their appointed cycle.

The defect of Burns's mind was that of will, one which has existed in many great poets, and in some great philosophers, but which has been visited in them with no such severe condemnation as that which has befallen him. As to all his impulses and all his faculties, they appear to have been the most healthy and vigorous. His keen sense of social enjoyment, his generosity, his integrity, his vast comprehension of men and nature, his profuse and powerful imagination, and admirable understanding, were the elements that went to the production of the most wonderful

being who ever walked the earth; and all these are seen in him not casually, nor apart, but living and moving together, as united portions of one organized whole. His poetry is not the result of a knack, or of a sibylline frenzy, but is the genuine and natural fruitage of the whole mind, and that one of more varied and splendid endowments than any between itself and the unapproached poets of a distant age. He did not, like some preceding and some following authors, divest himself of any of his human faculties or feelings, that a lawless and artificial fancy might occupy itself undisturbed in heaping together a fictitious and incoherent world. His knowledge and sense are everywhere the companions and supporters of his genius; nor is it true that he shakes off conscience and religion, to revel the more freely in sensual enjoyment. He was indeed weak and wandering; for his will was not adequate to his convictions; but his imaginative power and kindly affections made his evil doings less injurious to him, than they are to the more animal natures, and also render the celebration of wrong in his poetry infinitely less contagious to others, than in the writings of meaner and more sordid men. For such were the tendencies and qualities of his mind, that, in following him even to haunts of debauchery, we are not compelled to stoop to sympathy with the worthlessness of the gratifications in which he too often indulged, but

rather taught to feel and know how godlike is the privilege of transmuting the foul or the wretched into the nourishment of thought and the means of a high and intellectual gladness. There is no poetry in the enjoyment of which we keep a more innocent or poetic state of feeling than in reading the lyrics of Burns, which exalt even licence and riot, and purify evil by the might of his creative gifts. How different in this from the works of Rousseau, or even the earlier writings of Byron, in which the reality of evil is ever strong and substantial at the centre, surrounded by a thin gloss and affected verbiage! while in Burns the life and the potency are always to be found in the poetry with which he encircles the hint or incident that serves him as a pretext. If we attempt to render his compositions literal or historical, we reduce them to a jest, a name, a nothing; or, if there be a kernel of wrong, it is so poor, trivial, cold, and unattractive, as to be utterly inadequate for the explanation of the poet's rapture or our own. Put the *corpus delicti* in *Tam O'Shanter* or *the Jolly Beggars* into the hands of a police-reporter; and he will tell you that he can make nothing of it, that it is something so slight and shadowy, as to furnish no excitement whatever to the craving passions of the mob. The art and mastery of the poet are shown in getting away from the rudeness and meagreness of his nominal subject into regions of

intellect and imagination; while in some other writers the occurrence of which they treat, is barely alluded to at first, and all their intellect and imagination are employed to bring it closer and closer before our eyes, till it appears at last as the main object and purpose of their writing in all its naked and glowing pruriency. No; the faculties, the sympathies of this man could have gained nothing by longer life; for nothing was wanting in them which the noblest of our kind should have.

Nor did Burns fail to replenish with light the circle assigned to him. He had an understanding such as, with a different culture, might have made him the most keen and masterly of the busy. He had eloquence to be the lord of conversation, and a simple and constant love of nature, such as animated Isaac Walton or Gilbert White. But he was peculiarly called to be a great national poet; he was called to this by the state of his country, and by the character of his own genius. Before his day there was scarcely any subject of common interest for the different classes of Scotchmen. The national government was gone; the national religion acted with far greater force on the lower than on the higher orders; for many of the aristocracy were indifferent to it, and many of them dissenters from it: while literature, which ought to have been above all imbued with an eager patriotism, and to have held up a Scotch standard,

and given a Scotch cultivation to every Scotchman, was employed in raising the large and showy but diseased and unfavourable fruits of a school half French, half English, but not at all characteristic or native. The higher and lower ranges of society were therefore bound together by scarcely any mutual sympathies, or care for the same objects. Wallace was still the hero, and Knox the prophet of the people; while the gentry were reading *the Spectator*, and the philosophers and historians were imitating Montesquieu and Rousseau. A peasant stepped from behind his plough, and, striding into the ring of professors and men of the world, spoke to them and to all Scotland in a language which no Scotchman could refuse to obey, and which none before him had ever attempted to utter.

That peasant was Burns; and he unquestionably bore on his forehead the seal of his destination, and took upon himself a ministry for which powers were requisite such as had belonged to no man in these nations since the age of Charles I. His wit, his pathos, his manly sense, and triumphant lyric enthusiasm, were not only superior in their combinations to anything that had existed among us for more than a century; but separately would have equalled him to those who possessed in the highest degree the similar faculties. In him nothing was hollow, nothing artificial; his words are all expressive, and his thoughts all

true; and if the human nature which he presents to us be sometimes coarse in manner, and sometimes lax in morality, though never to the same extent as among the fashionable writers of the reign of Anne and the first two Georges, be it remembered that it is always a living and genuine human nature; that by him no scarecrows or phantoms or abstractions are sought to be passed off on us as men; that he exhibits to us no emotion, which he has not thoroughly conceived, nor describes any appearance, which his mind's eye has not clearly seen.

Nor was the wonder the less in his day, nor among some persons in ours, when the mode of his education was considered. How could he, a man without information, be a great author, unless he was in some way inspired? He was indeed inspired with that living power, which the information given by the Scotch academic scheme would almost certainly have repressed. He was filled with that breath of genius, which has sometimes almost kindled into a flame the dead ashes of abstract terms and generalities, the chief elements of the scholastic system of Scotland, but which in him was happily turned aside to no use so unworthy and so unprofitable. He had not been nourished on the dry dust of terminologies and technical artifices, but had drawn his knowledge from the real and vital stores of the world; and it was all therefore of that kind which readily

turns into power. The professors at Edinburgh, even those whom a dead metaphysical system had made indifferent to practical truth, might well stare and be confounded at seeing that all their years of lecturing and abstracting, and their crowded benches of admiring pupils had never furnished one instance of success in the great object of intellectual education, the generation of power, which a peasant or a child who had heard *Tam O'Shanter* or the War-song of Bruce, would not have laughed to see compared with the mighty, the generous, the thoughtful mind of the Ayrshire ploughman. Nor would it have served them to say that genius cannot be produced by education; for, though education cannot produce it, education can stifle it, and doubtless has in numberless instances stifled or perverted the genius, which has come youthful and hopeful into the hands of Scotch professors. Why are there no great poets among the negro slaves or the American savages? but because their education, the influence, that is, on their minds, of the circumstances in which they are placed, can never permit the development of mental power. It cannot be said that Burns was an example of natural capacity, and that the men among whom he found himself at Edinburgh were merely examples of good education; for there is no instance of natural capacity, in an entirely unfavourable situation, having forced

its way to supremacy in thought. Burns was just as much educated as the pupils of Dr. Blair or of Dr. Reid; but he was educated by realities, they by abstractions; he by substances, they by shadows; and so admirable was the instruction given him by his father, and so well had he learned to attach importance to things, instead of words, that his boyhood seems scarcely to have suffered even from reading Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding. That book indeed left but few traces in his mind; while the realities of geometry, which he fortunately studied for a short time in his early manhood, evidently did much towards aiding his growth, and so strongly possessed him, that they have sometimes even forced themselves into his poetry. Thus it was that the national poet of Scotland, the first modern author who so wrote as to teach the hearts of his compatriots to leap within them at the name of their country,—thus it was that he who bound Scotchman to Scotchman by a stronger bond of sympathy than any before existing,—that the man who has done immortal honour to the reign and the land in which he lived, and to the noble tongue he spoke, came forth from among its peasants, not its men of learning, and formed the thoughts that now pervade England, India, and America,—not while listening to lectures on the association of ideas, but while jesting and praying, ploughing and sowing, reading Shakspeare and talking politics,

in the wretched huts or sterile fields of obscure labour.

Why wonder that so little was done to aid him at Edinburgh? He gained the condescending praise of polite academicians for his rude and curious efforts. Among them he was superior to them, and different from them, but in no way belonged to them. He had knowledge, compared to which their acquirements were but dreams of the night. He wrought with powers, and they with rules; they juggled, and he performed miracles. He spoke of human nature, and was a man; they talked of the faculty of abstraction, and were professors. He had probably hoped much from the literary men of his country; and the disappointment of these hopes, when, being himself godlike, instead of walking with the gods, he was surrounded by an interminable conflict of word-champions and shadow-fighters, may perhaps have, in some degree, perplexed and saddened him; but he did not lose faith in himself or in nature, when he had learned to believe no longer in the patrons and practitioners of letters. He had still something to put his trust in; for the tones of God's great melody, which circles through all worlds, were still vibrating in his heart. He judged wisely and resolutely in betaking himself to farm, ay, and even to guage, rather than attempt to be one of the machine-horses of literature. For the narrowest and most sordid sphere of practical life

was better for him, than the drawing-rooms of mechanical teachers of composition, and empirical lectures on philosophy,—better for him, even though he was thus exposed to vulgar temptations, which, alas! he had not always the strength to resist. And why lament over his early fate? He did not die until he had done his task; and knowing as he did the weakness of his will, it was far better for him thus to perish, than to lead any longer a life, which, adding nothing to his intellect or imagination, might have served only to deaden his conscience. The precious vessel shivered itself into fragments, rather than continue any longer to hold poison. But those bright streams in which the wine of the angels so long flowed from it, will delight and invigorate the world for ever.

CRITICAL ESSAYS.

ON COLERIDGE'S CHRISTABEL:

An Appeal Apologetic, from Philip drunk to Philip sober.

From the Athenæum for 1828.

IT is common to hear everything which Mr. Coleridge has written condemned with bitterness and boldness. His poems are called extravagant; and his prose works, poems too, and of the noblest breed, are pronounced to be mystical, obscure, metaphysical, theoretical, unintelligible, and so forth; just as the same phrases have over and over been applied, with as much sagacity, to Plato, St. Paul, Cudworth, and Kant. But *Christabel* is the only one of his writings which is ever treated with unmingled contempt; and I wish to examine with what justice this feeling has been excited. In the first place it should be remembered, that, at the time when it was written, the end of the last century, no attempt had been made in England by a man of genius for a hundred and fifty years to embody in poetry those resources which feudal manners and popular superstitions supply to the imagination. To those who care not for the mythology of demoniac terrors and wizard enchantment, Mr. Coleridge did not write. He did not write for Bayles and Holbachs; nor did he write for Glan-

vils or Jameses: but for those who, not believing the creed of the people, not holding that which was in a great degree the substantial religion of Europe for a thousand years, yet see in these superstitions the forms under which devotion presented itself to the minds of our forefathers, the grotesque mask assumed for a period, like the veil on the face of Moses, as a covering for the glory of God. Persons who think this obselete faith to be merely ridiculous, will of course think so of *Christabel.* He who perceives in them a beauty of their own, and discovers all the good to which in those ages they were necessary accompaniments, will not object to have them represented, together with all the attributes and associations which rightly belong to them, and in which genius, while it raises them from their dim cemetery, delights again to array them.

That much of the machinery of the poem is, in the eyes of a natural philosopher or a woman of fashion, trivial or laughable, bears not upon the question. The fullest persuasion of the impossibility of every occurrence in the tale is not in the least incompatible with that kind of faith which is amply sufficient for the demands of the poet. It admits of much question, whether the mind be in the more healthy and natural state, when it is disposed to treat with scorn and ridicule whatever lies beyond the limit of its own

convictions, or when it studies with affection and interest every shape and mode of human belief, and attempts to trace out and sympathize with that germ of good and truth, which lies somewhere amid the roots of every article of popular credence. But the latter is at all events the only condition of feeling on which poetry pretends to act; and he who brings a mind bristling with demonstration or experiment to receive the impact of a creative imagination, acts as iniquitously as Laertes fighting with a sword against the foil of Hamlet.

The very first lines of *Christabel* are frequently selected as objects of ridicule. Be it remembered that they are the opening of a tale of witchery, and that, unless they are read in that good faith and singleness of heart, with which a child would listen to such a story, they are not heard with the predisposition to which alone the author addressed himself.

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock;
Tu-whit! Tu-who!
And hark again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew!
Sir Leoline, the baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;
From her kennel, beneath the rock,
She maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour,
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over-loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Now, I confess, I do not see what there is more absurd in this than in the croaking raven of Virgil; or, though it be talked of as the drivelling folly of Bottom, why it is a whit less dignified than the song of Puck.

> Whilst the scritch-owl, scritching loud,
> Puts the wretch that lies in woe,
> In remembrance of a shroud;

or again, than the lay of *Winter:*

> When nightly sings the staring owl,
> Tu——whu!
> Tu——whit! Tu—whu!

I avow that these verses seem to me admirably calculated for bringing before the reader the 'witching hour of night,' with all that thrilling and ghost-ridden feeling which is the proper recipient of the mysterious story. As to the boarding-school-miss delicacy about the gender of the mastiff, we hear no objection to Cowper's lines,

> Kilwick's echoing wood,
> Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood.

And judging from the analogy of human beings, and from long and general tradition, an ancient female of the dog species is as likely to be distinguished above the male by supernatural endowments, and intimacy with the foul fiend, as is confessedly the case among human beings. In the succeeding lines there is nothing to observe upon, except their exquisite and pictorial beauty,

unless, with a certain notorious critic, I were to remark the phrase in the third of these lines:

> She had dreams all yesternight
> Of her own betrothed knight;
> Dreams that made her moan and leap,
> As on her bed she lay in sleep.

The critic who has objected to the employment of the word *leap*, as an expression for the restlessness occasioned by a painful dream, might perhaps be puzzled to reply if he were asked why it is inappropriate. The next lines to these are beautiful specimens of a kind of excellence, which runs through the whole poem, the presentation of the clearest and brightest pictures by the smallest number of words.

> She stole along, she nothing spoke;
> The breezes they were still also;
> And nought was green upon the oak,
> But moss and rarest misletoe.
> She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
> And in silence prayeth she.

A hundred stanzas of details would not make plainer the terror and devotion of the lovely lady, and the silent dimness of the ancient oak. All that follows for two pages is in a style of the most concise and brilliant perfection; and no poet whatsoever of our day has given us, in four times the space, the same quantity and variety of living imagery as is treasured in these thirty or forty lines. The description of the fiendish damsel,

if such she were, is given in three words, with a grace and distinctness which no one but Spenser could have equalled, and which would have cost him many more words to convey. Her narrative is a masterly counterfeiting of the effect which terror produces, in leading the sufferer to dwell on unimportant, as much as on important particulars, and also exhibits the attempt which she makes, after the manner of all skilful liars, to add evidence to her story by minute details, together with the superfluity of epithet and adjuration, and shows her consciousness of falsehood by the over-anxiety to secure credence. I am perfectly convinced that no play of our day by any other writer,—nor is this saying much,—contains a passage so dramatic as the tale told by Geraldine. The circumstances which follow are all of them imagined with the highest beauty and fitness. Christabel had a terrible dream about evils befalling her lover. She went out into the forest to pray beneath an ancient oak, and found there a lady in distress, who told her a story of unprovoked outrage and suffering. Then mark how the narrative, throughout the variety of its pictures, so full of minute and elegant tracery, is filled with indications of something unearthly and dangerous in the character of the stranger. In the first place, by the belief of our ancestors, the evil powers could harm no one who had not consented in some way to their design, and sub-

mitted to their influence. Therefore, after the tale of Geraldine, come these lines:—

Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she,)
And help a wretched maid to flee.
Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine.

Then again, in entering the castle through the wicket in the gate,

The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out,
The lady sank, belike through pain;
And Christabel, with might and main,
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate.
Then the lady rose again,
And moved as she were not in pain.

Then, as they cross the court,

Outside her kennel the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make.

Every line in this portion of the poem is filled with some strong under-import; and how completely do we perceive, in the next paragraph, the tokens we should expect of a supernatural and evil presence!

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will.
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But, when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,

Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.

The element of fire seems to recognise the presence of the fiend; and the domestic hearth cries aloud, as it were, to the innocent maiden, and lights up the gleaming eye of her destroyer. The following paragraphs are remarkable for their clearness and brightness of description, without any of that detailed and wordy minuteness which injures the corresponding passages of Scott. The ladies converse about Christabel's deceased mother; and the daughter utters a pious ejaculation of longing for her presence:

O mother dear! that thou wert here!
I would, said Geraldine, she were.

This last line has been quoted, as if it were mere flatness and drivelling. But mark the result. Geraldine, by way of ingratiating herself with her victim, pretends to sympathize with her filial affection, and therein expresses her assent to a wish for the presence of the dead mother. The spirit comes, comes to protect her child, and, if possible, rescue her from the demon. After the last couplet,

But soon with altered voice, said she—
Off, wandering mother! peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee!
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodyless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she?
Off, woman off! this hour is mine:

Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me.
* * * * *
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, 'Tis over now!

Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright:
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

No one, it would seem, could be insensible to the perfect fitness of every word in these latter rhimes, or could fail to perceive with how few touches the beautiful witch or demon is placed before us. We have room for no more long quotations from the first part of the poem, except those exquisite final lines of the conclusion:

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax; her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds,
Large tears that leave the lashes bright:
And oft the while she seems to smile,
As infants at a sudden light:
Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 'twere!

> What if she knew her mother near!
> But this she knows, in joys and woes,
> That saints will aid, if men will call;
> For the blue sky bends over all!

Throughout the poem there runs and lives one especial excellence, the beauty of single lines and expressions, perfect flowers in themselves, yet interfering as little with the breadth and unity of the general effect, as the primroses and hawthorns of the valley with its sweeping perspective of light and shadow. No one, I imagine, can fail to recognise in it the original germ of *the Lay of the Last Minstrel;* but how superior is it to that spirited and brilliant tale, in the utter absence both of defect and superfluity in the diction,—in the thrilling interest and beauty of every, the slightest circumstance,—in the relation of each atom to the whole,—and in the deep reflection, which is the very atmosphere and vital air of the whole composition!

The Broad Stone of Honour: or, The True Sense and Practice of Chivalry.—By Kenelm Henry Digby, Esq.

(From the Athenæum for 1829.*)*

ALL history is filled with gorgeous systems, which have existed either in books or practice, founded on some partial and ill-comprehended impulses, and not on the deeper and more regular principles of the mind. They have seldom flourished, except in connection with something wiser and more permanent, and, though not the sacred text, may be considered as brilliant marginal illuminations, which sometimes illustrate, often caricature, its meaning, and never express it in all its purity and power. Such was Chivalry, a splendid and fantastic dream, at one moment sinking into the merest folly and inanity of the slumbering mind, and rising at another to the borders of sacred and prophetic vision.

We confess that its origin does not appear to us that unaccountable mystery, which it has sometimes been regarded. Wherever two heterogeneous principles are forced into coalition, the result will at first be something false and bright, partaking in part of the attributes of both, but animated by the essence of neither, though melting away insensibly on both sides into one or the

other. Such we believe to have been the origin of the latest Alexandrian Platonism, when Pagan philosophy, disguised or not, as it happened, in Pagan polytheism, encountered revealed religion, and as yet was struggling against it. The same theory might be exemplified by the history of European, and, we believe, of Arabian philosophy; nor will it want confirmation from the revolutions of the arts. Chivalry appears to be the natural transitory product from the junction of Christianity with the spirit of the Teutonic tribes; the sparkling sunbow in the foam which rose from the confluence of these opposing forces.

The Germany of Tacitus was undoubtedly not intended by him as a literal portrait of the country which he professes to describe. He dwells on those features in which his countrymen were at that time most deficient, as if to reproach them for their inferiority; though any improvement to be produced in this way could scarcely be of a different kind from that of the Roman ladies, who, in admiration of the northern yellow hair, covered their own sable ringlets with wigs of the envied colour. Enough however remains of certain, in the immortal Essay of Tacitus, and in the writings of Cæsar and others, to prove that there existed in the minds of the Germans a genuine heroic ideal, to which, however irregularly and inconsistently, they sought to conform their actions. Frank, ostentatious, and headlong

courage,—enterprise for the mere sake of activity and excitement, often mingled with and yielding to the love of plunder,—respect for women, and laws, fanciful or not, restraining with regard to them the animal impulses,—all these are manifest among the tribes of ancient Germany.

When they became the temporal masters of the Christian laity, they became also the spiritual slaves of the Christian priesthood. What could have been expected to arise from these circumstances? A powerful and rich nobility would naturally delight in splendour; a race of warriors, placed among all the elements of contention, would not be likely to relinquish war; barbarians, with nothing but a formless and unlettered superstition, could not fail to be subdued by the imposing array of Christianity as it was then practised, and by the talents, imperfect as they were, of the clergy; and men who had been accustomed to regard females with deference, becoming more luxurious and more polished, would probably establish between the sexes whatever elaborate courtesy and fanciful refinement they were capable of conceiving. Thus we arrive at the rudiments of the chivalrous character. We find among them no tendency to intellectual activity, except so far as would suffice to ornament the intercourse in hall or bower with rude verse and ruder music,—no disposition to look any further in religion than a priest might point out, or to

seek in it anything but a patron saint, who was to be served by the sword, and a mechanism of salvation, of which the lance should be the moving force.

In the course of time the point of honour became more refined, the respect for women more ostentatious and outwardly delicate; more and more of the humanizing influences of religion, imperfectly as it was then known, were mingled with the system. But the ground-plan remained the same, though additional stages increased the loftiness of the tower, though the shields suspended in the hall were enriched with more honourable blazonry, the windows glowed with more splendid emblems of love, valour, and superstition, gayer pennons waved from the battlements, and more courteous defiances were spoken in the tilt-yard, echoed by minstrels, and applauded from the cushioned galleries.

The learned and delightful author, whose work we have named at the head of this paper, is the sturdiest and most enthusiastic champion of Chivalry, whom we happen to have met with. He defends it with far other zeal, knowledge, and talents, from those which have been displayed in its support by several modern sentimental writers, who appear to connect with it no notions but those of crimson scarfs and gilded shields, love, horsemanship, and bloody battles. He evidently writes with deep conviction; and his views

appear to us the fairest possible exhibition of the system.

Mr. Digby expatiates at great length on all the knightly virtues, of which he can find any instance, in history or poetry, from the time of Abraham to about a hundred years ago. All these examples of human excellence he binds together by the spell of an admirable English style, and heightens by the riches of his unbounded learning, and so calls the whole glittering and magnificent heap the trophy of Chivalry. If the work were something less long and less learned, we do not know any which would be more likely to win a courteous and flowery belief in its doctrine from the tastes and impulses of all. But there is in it one error, or that which so seems to us, the great error of the book, the great error of Mr. Digby, the great error of Chivalry, which would lead us sincerely to regret if *the Broad Stone of Honour* were to become popular.

The writer defends Chivalry, not merely for the valour and courtesy which it required and fostered, but as founded on the Roman Catholic creed, or on what he considers to be so. We believe that he is right; we believe that Chivalry was necessarily connected with the doctrines of the Papal Church; we believe that there is an essential difference between the idea of a chevalier and that of a gentleman, between the character of Bayard and that of Sir Philip Sidney.

It is on this account we say that Chivalry was not made to last, that its heroes are now the shadows of a painted dream, and that the writer of this beautiful and earnest volume walks alone in an age, which, if not equal to some gone by, at least supplies a few bright spirits in whose convictions it would do him no dishonour to partake.

The perfect gentleman is distinguished from the perfect man by something of aristocratic pride and worldly magnificence. The knight, as displayed by Mr. Digby,—and he could have no more powerful or favourable delineator,—was distinguished from him by something more,—by an utter torpor of the reason, which led him to substitute, for the living and enlightened faith of the conscience, a belief made up of fanciful impulse and of passive assent to dogmas, for which it was neither desired to find evidence nor meaning. The latter is the religion stated by Mr. Digby as the main principle of Chivalry, and obviously announced as his own. Do we believe that this is the religion which really animates him? No; for we discern in his writings all the traces of a happy, an active, a benevolent, a pious, and therefore in many respects a healthy mind. But we believe that want of habit, or perhaps of inclination, to turn his eyes within, and reflect on what he is conscious of, prevents him from understanding the real grounds of his own belief; and in this way also we account for

whatever good actually existed in the spirit of Chivalry. But we shall pursue this topic no further: for it is most painful to express vehement dissent from such a writer, and, we will say, though we have no personal knowledge of Mr. Digby, such a man as the author of *the Broad Stone of Honour.*

We have never read a volume more full than this of a loving gentleness, and an earnest admiration for all things beautiful and excellent. Its pages seem to breathe out the freshness of the fields, and the venerable air of antiquity. The beings with whom the author surrounds us, are lovely, and sparkling, and bold, yet filled with the purest and truest life-blood of humanity; and, contemplating them as they glide in long procession from the book into the heart, we turn from the meagreness and deformity of the greater portion of our present literature, with the feeling which rose on the lips of Miranda, when, accustomed to the sight of Caliban and Sycorax, she first beheld the troop of brave creatures brought by strange witchery to her island. If every leaf were a plate of silver or ivory graven by Cellini, it could not be more rich in beautified shapes, and pregnant symbols, and all the embodied poetry of a shaping imagination. It even seems,—so powerful are the thoughts of the writer,—as if the immeasurable world of allusion and quotation, the bloom, as it were, collected from all existing

literature, were by him appropriated and transfused into his own conceptions. The unnumbered fragments and graces of all books which he has gathered together, do not seem laid in a confused heap for barbaric ostentation; but his own fancies and conclusions are assimilated to them; and they all appear together like jewels disposed in some fair, significant, and complicated figure, on the golden tissue of his general design. We raise our eyes from them to look at some ancient picture or green landscape, and do not feel that we have made any sudden and startling transition; but the whole woven and flowing web, with all its emblems of honour and religious heraldry, seems of a piece with whatever we can see without, or remember or create within us, of delicate and true, precious and sacred.

We do not say, nor assuredly mean, that any one would do wisely in adopting Mr. Digby's opinions. These, if not capricious, are too often infected by the great false principle, which seems in him,—how differently from that in other men!—to occupy a chamber in his brain, and never to approach his heart. But we think that, in defending Chivalry on the grounds which he has adopted, he has, unconsciously perhaps, done good of another, and, in our opinion, more valuable kind than that which he intended. We are sure that his sympathies, except some accidental, if we may so express ourselves, and external ones, are all

healthy as well as lively; and in an age like ours, when men too often err by false and weak and artificial impulses, as well as systems, we are inclined to think that we could find no better awakening and preparation for that still higher state of mind, which Mr. Digby only partially exemplifies, and altogether condemns, than the keen and genial sensibility and wholesome affections so plainly manifested in every line of this volume. We must be children, before we can be men. We must be sure that we have emotions and feelings, before we can hopefully attempt to subordinate them to the reason. We are convinced that Mr. Digby would be an invaluable friend, though we cannot agree with him, that it would be advantageous to have the Abbé de la Mennais for a father confessor.

History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France, from the year 1807 to the year 1814. By W. F. P. Napier, C.B., Lt.-Colonel H.-P. Forty-Third Regiment.

(From the Athenæum for 1829.*)*

THIS is the most celebrated, and probably the ablest military history in our language. The story which Colonel Napier professes to tell, is that of the only wars since those of Marlborough, waged by England in Europe, to which we now attach any considerable interest. That interest arises in a great degree from the extent and variety of occurrences in which our countrymen took the foremost part, from the success which waited on their exertions, from the remarkable talents and character of their commander, and from the fact that the struggle in the Peninsula is the last in which England has been engaged. Were there nothing else observable in the Spanish war, these peculiarities would be sufficient to maintain a general curiosity and sympathy with regard to it, and to furnish ample ground for the labours of an eloquent, learned, and popular historian. Such undoubtedly is Colonel Napier. His general knowledge and acuteness are conspicuous in every page of his writings. We are often surprised and pleased by some unexpected allusion to good literature or famous

story; the descriptions of the various places of combat are admirably clear and comprehensive; and the reasons of the warlike manœuvres are made plain, even to quiet civilians, by the skill and talent of the writer. There is no lack of reflections, and these, though we frequently dissent from them, neither common-place nor absurd. The book is full of an eager soldierly ardour; and with regard to individuals we perceive no undue bias, except a slight tendency to favour Soult, scarcely blamable under the circumstances, and a prejudice against Mr. Canning, not wonderful in a man who naturally inclines to look at persons and reputations through a merely military telescope.

The style, above all, of the history is really excellent; we might almost say, perfect. There is certainly no great quality in which it is deficient: it has ease, animation, brevity, correctness, and vigour, and these, taken together, in a greater degree than any other historical writer of English, except Ralcigh and Hallam. For Clarendon is prolix, and often vague,—Hume weak, negligent, and unidiomatic,—Robertson monotonous and heavy,—Gibbon ostentatious,—Scott careless,—Lingard made to sell,—Sharon Turner for style contemptible,—Mill formal and petty,—and Southey, who approaches nearest to the true mark, too often misses it by feebleness and affectation. These latter remarks, be it remembered, concern merely the structure and beauty

of periods and paragraphs. Of general merit there is little wanting in Colonel Napier's work, but (which indeed is the rarest of qualities, and in modern English historians absolutely unknown,) the weight and depth of observation conspicuous in Tacitus and Machiavelli, and sometimes in Niebuhr; sometimes also, we may add, as we are speaking of a military writer, in Polybius.

Attributing, as we do, these brilliant and various accomplishments to the author whose work now lies before us, we may perhaps be asked what other fault we find with him, besides the want of that profound aphoristic wisdom already adverted to. Our answer is ready. Colonel Napier in our opinion has written the history of a war, of which he has not caught the true spirit and meaning. It is easy to say that the man whom we criticize is probably a much better judge of this than we are; but in the first place, we claim to be credited only so far as we support our opinion by sound argument; and secondly, we do not mean to enter the lists with a learned tactician and practised soldier, as to the propriety or impropriety of any particular manœuvres.

Colonel Napier we will allow to be unrivalled authority in the theory of scientific war. But it seems to us that, in narrating and examining the Spanish contest, he has mistaken the nature

of much of the mechanism on which he sits in judgement. This matter is one in which the most skilful and instructed soldier, if he be a mere soldier, must be declared incompetent. And if the endowments and graces which accompany his military knowledge, do not include considerable reach of thought, and power of moving beyond his purely professional sphere, industry and eloquence, and the utmost advantage of position, will undoubtedly be ineffectual for the performance of a lasting and complete work. This is the case with the historian of the Peninsular War.

The resistance of the Spaniards to Bonaparte we consider as one of the noblest efforts of national enthusiasm; and the character of that people seems to us, in many respects, deserving of the highest admiration. The country had been ruled for more than two centuries by one of the most degrading despotisms that ever existed. The lower classes were eminently ignorant, and consequently prejudiced and passionate. The upper ranks were very deficient in sympathy with them, and had been enfeebled by their government more probably than any aristocracy in Europe. The Church had studiously excluded knowledge; and naturally none but the worst kind had gained a furtive admittance. Except this Church, every institution of the country had fallen into decay. Foreigners scarcely ever appeared in Spain; and the few who passed the

dreary boundary of the dying land, found there but smouldering relics of the fire which once blazed with so much splendour over all the earth.

Such was the state of a kingdom, against which the most cunning and strongest military tyranny that ever existed suddenly put forth all its resources. The chief fortresses were won by frauds more vile than those which consign felons to Newgate. The former government was destroyed; and its immediate re-establishment rendered impossible by the captivity of the sovereign. Many of the ablest and best instructed of the Spaniards, of those who would naturally have been guides to the people, were willing to truck the independence of their country for the political benefits promised by the invaders. In these circumstances what could be expected from Spain? The nation was a crowd of individuals almost entirely divested of that organization which had previously united them; and powerful and disciplined armies, commanded by some of the most skilful generals in the world, held the cities and fortresses, and occupied the highways of the kingdom. Never were a people in a worse situation for maintaining their independence: yet, if they did not rise and struggle, they would necessarily become a province of France; and the race which had beaten back the invasion of Africa, which had conquered America, and once given law to Europe, would become slaves to the slave of a French usurper.

There have been nations, which, in such a state of things, would have given evidence of courage and patriotism only by sullen murmurs and reluctant servility, and would have been applauded in history even for these manifestations of public virtue. Spain did more. The habits of action and self-guidance, the mechanism of resistance were utterly wanting; but the war of the Peninsula proved that there is in the Spaniard a force of individual character akin to the spirit of Padilla and of Cortes, and equal, even in the nineteenth century, to high occasions. There was nothing else on which the hopes of independence could rely; but this was much. It gathered the nation under a standard, which once overshadowed half the world, and bore against the French with the rude unsystematized energies of the whole people. The explosion of indignant and often arrogant courage drove the invaders beyond the Ebro, but only to return after a time with tenfold numbers and resolution. Hordes of peasants, half armed and scarcely at all disciplined, were generally dispersed with ease when brought to battle; and the French again obtained possession of almost the whole Peninsula.

Now it really seems a little unreasonable that men of skill and authority, overflowing with Jomini and science and literature, with Hannibal and Frederick and so forth at their fingers' ends, should very violently condemn the unfortunate

Spaniards, because they had not knowledge and discipline by instinct. Deprive England of her middle classes, degrade her gentry, subject her for centuries to the Inquisition and the Index Expurgatorius, annihilate her army, and bring a foreign force of three hundred thousand men into the country, support them by strong fortresses, give them possession of London, Manchester, and Bristol, and set half the educated men amongst us on the side of the invaders, and consider what kind of resistance we should be likely to make. A gallant one undoubtedly, one full of obstinacy and courage and enterprise, and finally successful. But should we have no instances of fifty thousand half-disciplined peasants beaten by twenty thousand veterans? Would there be among us no apathy, no ignorance, no arrogance or frenzy, no examples of fierce revenge for unexampled wrongs? none of those innumerable follies and crimes attributed, and often justly, to the Spaniards? They promised, says Colonel Napier, infinitely more than they performed. Is this wonderful? Do all the boastings and failures, of which he speaks, prove anything but that self-confidence, which belongs to the Spanish character, and without which the nation never would have attempted, much less succeeded in the many glorious enterprises that ennoble its history? They would not submit to be ruled by English counsel, though their own leaders and governors were often weak and pas-

sionate and incapable. And we should like to know if any nation, with strong national feeling, much more if the Spaniards distinguished for the strongest, would ever submit, ought ever to submit, to the rule even of the wisest and most benevolent auxiliaries. If the spirit of independence had not been so mighty as to spurn the notion of obeying foreigners, would not the country have gained much more by yielding its free-will to Bonaparte than to Mr. Frere? The only possibility or purpose of resistance depended on the vehemence of the resolution to stand self-supported, or not at all. And again, when the historian narrates, with the horror of a chivalrous soldier, the cruelties committed by the Spaniards on the French, why does he represent the cruelties of the French as mere pardonable retaliations for these? Why does he almost uniformly lay out of sight the unrivalled and detestable criminality of the first aggression of Bonaparte on Spain? Why uniformly forget the infamous horrors practised by the French soldiers on the people,—practised indeed by almost all French armies, in almost every country in which they have fought,—the first and real causes of the murders which the Spanish husbands and fathers and brothers frequently and madly perpetrated?

We do not mean to say that Colonel Napier has overlooked all this: but we do think that he has generally wished to throw the remembrance of it aside, and to look at the Spanish war as an

ordinary contest between disciplined armies, to judge it by the rules of these more common and systematic struggles, and to praise or blame an outraged, brave, tumultuous people, without sufficient institutions or rulers,—and whom their previous government had done all in its power to semibarbarize,—according to principles framed from the practice of well-drilled and regularly commanded armies, fighting, not for their country's life, honour, vengeance, but to gain in quiet times a fortress or a canton for some sleepy, card-playing sovereign.

I. Observations on an Autograph of Shakspere, and the Orthography of his Name. Communicated to the Society of Antiquaries by Sir Frederick Madden. London, 1838. 8vo.

II. De la Servitude Volontaire, ou le Contr'un, par Estienne de la Boëtie (1548), avec les Notes de M. Coste, et une Préface de F. de la Mennais. Paris, 1835. 8vo.

III. Essais de Michel de Montaigne, avec des Notes de tous les Commentateurs. Paris, 1834. 1 vol. large 8vo.

(From the London and Westminster Review for 1837.*)*

THE first of these works is a kind of modern sucker from the ancient root of Florio's translation of *Montaigne's Essays*, printed in the year 1603. Sir Frederick Madden in his pamphlet brings forward evidence, which appears sufficient, that the particular copy under his consideration was the property of Shakspere; for so, it appears, we are to write the name. And the title-page of this little Essay bears a fac-simile of the poet's signature. It is to be lamented that this cannot be copied here. But our readers must take it on our testimony, that the name is in characters as crabbed, as if Shakspere, like Hamlet, had held it, "as our statists do, a baseness to write fair." There is a passage in *the Tempest* well known to contain several expressions identical with those of Florio in his trans-

lation of a part of one of the Essays. And it would at all events have been highly improbable that Shakspere should not have read them. On the whole the celebrated soliloquy in *Hamlet* presents a more characteristic and expressive resemblance to much of Montaigne's writings, than any other portion of the plays of the great dramatist which we at present remember; though it would doubtless be easy to trace many apparent transfers from the Frenchman into the Englishman's works, as both were keen and many-sided observers of mankind in the same age and neighbouring countries. But Hamlet was in those days nó popular type of character; nor were Montaigne's views and tone familiar to men till he had himself made them so. Now the Prince of Denmark is very nearly a Montaigne, lifted to a higher eminence, and agitated by more striking circumstances and a severer destiny, and altogether a somewhat more passionate structure of man. It is not however very wonderful that Hamlet, who was but a part of Shakspere, should exhibit to us more than the whole of Montaigne; and the external facts appear to contradict any notion of a French ancestry for the Dane, as the play is said to have been produced in 1600, and the translation of the Essays not for three years later.

However this may be, it is interesting to find any points of analogy between a poetical creation, probably the most subtle and profound of Shak-

spere, and a living man actually co-existent with the poet, and who must doubtless often have seen in Paris men whom Shakspere conversed with but a few days afterwards in London. They had the same busy and fervid world around them, listened to the same tales of Eastern travel and American adventure; and all the great public events and personages in the foreground of the picture seen by one were conspicuous in the background gazed at by the other. Very ordinary men, nay, inanimate things derive an interest from our certainty that they were contemporary with those whom the world cannot forget. The celebrated and productive minds, whose lives flowed on through the same days of storm and sunshine, seem each to reflect a light upon the other; and the group starts forward into distinctness and vividness, while the single figure might have seemed dim, cold, and stiff, as the recumbent effigy in a twilight chapel.

Montaigne on all accounts deserves at least as much notice as the world has ever given to him; and readers, who willingly spend much time in attempting to estimate the comparative worth of books, many of which will probably be outlived by their authors, may not perhaps grudge an hour to some remarks on the merits and peculiarities of a writer, who was read by Shakspere, and whose fame has survived the mutations of more than two centuries.

It is probably the great canon of all biographies, and of all writings the interest of which is mainly biographical, that those are best, which present the most complete picture of the lives they relate to. To some this will seem a truism, to others a paradox. But most persons appear to judge of the value of the picture of a human life, with reference to the importance of the man in the history of the world, rather than to the fulness and accuracy of the delineation. Yet it may be well maintained that the structure and growth of a man, of any man, are in themselves so grave and fruitful a reality, that, independently of extraordinary endowments or exploits, a true and perfect image of his inward being would be a richer and higher creation, than any portrait at all less accurate of a much more remarkable mind. The object is itself so deep and immense, that, in contemplating any single example of it, all differences of degree are lost sight of. The mind is so filled by the aspect of Mont Blanc, that it refuses to admit the mere arithmetical fact of the doubly or trebly superior altitude of Chimborazo and the Himalayah. The scientific measurement may be accurate; but a mass of earth ten times the height would not more completely possess the eye and heart with a sense of how sublime and lasting a thing, of how overpowering vastness a mountain is. Now, whatever the foot-rule and barometer may say, a man is larger and more than a moun-

tain. In the only instance on record in which the two characters were combined, that of Quinbus Flestrin at Lilliput, those ingenious people, no doubt, regarded it as more wonderful to see a mountain endowed with human qualities, than they would have done to see a man merely enlarged to the size of a mountain. A man swelled and petrified into a hill would in effect have sunk and dwindled. But the hill, could it be imbued with life and reason, would undergo a change no less ennobling than the clay figure of Prometheus, or the statue of Pygmalion, when kindling with the fiery spirit of will and consciousness. Still more therefore is it true of men, than of the grandest physical appearance, that in contemplating any one of them the mere comparative diversities vanish from the eye. Any one is not so much greater or less, as infinite; and his compass spreads beyond the utmost limit of our vision, and absorbs all attempt at a precise estimate.

Of all men whose memories at all survive, the least fruitful for us are the mere vague historic shadows, around which there is a din and whirl of social tumult, but of whose inward lives we know so little, that they remain as scarcely more than names on tombs or hollow trophies. Next to them in insignificance for us, although not quite so low, however really inferior in vigour and truth of nature, are the declaimers and dealers in rhetorical falsehood,—a Seneca, a Rousseau, a Haz-

litt. For by turning their language inside out, by pulling to pieces the fictitious structure, and as it were anatomizing the wax-work, we may, through a laborious process of reflection and reconstruction, arrive at some knowledge of what they were, from the study of what they desired to appear. But the truly precious and instructive specimens of human nature which the past leaves us, are the men in whom we directly, and from themselves, know both what they were, and why and how they were so. And it is very remarkable that we have not this knowledge of any worthless and despicable soul. Those who have painted themselves truly, however unconsciously, are the true and ample minds. The weak and base, who have designed to do it at all, have always betaken themselves to distortion and falsehood, as persons of misshapen forms often throw themselves into unnatural and painful attitudes, to hide, as they imagine, the blemishes of their figures. On the other hand, we are minutely and abundantly informed of the mind and character of Augustin and Luther, of Dante, of Cicero, of the holy and stainless Socrates. We know Milton, as he was, and with open eyes behold him luminous in his blindness. We stand beside young Goethe, while we listen to his *Poetry and Truth*, and seem with his universal sensibility to receive the just and sharp impression from all things and men, and with his unwearied and felicitous intelligence to shape

all into new and complete pictures. And far meaner and narrower as was the man, it is in this way that we grow acquainted with Montaigne, when we read his *Essays*, and find that there are few of our kinsmen or friends whom we can see into so thoroughly, or with whom, though dwelling for years under one roof, we seem to live in such intimate communion.

This is a great thing. The parings of nails, the clippings of hair, the worn-out slipper of a conqueror's foot, which has kicked thousands or millions of men before it, the glove from a hand that many lips delighted to salute, though lips and fingers have long since been food for worms, —these matters have for some their value. We doubt not that the peruke of Louis XIV., or the cocked hat of Marlborough, would fetch, in any London auction-room, a price beyond Voltaire's History of the one, or Archdeacon Coxe's Life of the other. Yet these memorials can suggest, even to the creative soul of a collector of curiosities, only a faint and imperfect conception of their former owners; while, in the writings of any one who, like Montaigne, has chronicled himself, we have the very man, a living human being brought before us. We are not compelled to infer the kernel from the husk, the Hercules from—not the foot—but the sandal, to fill up for ourselves with substantial form the empty vestments which adumbrate their wearer. Here

the inward is that which is clearest, the flame within the coloured lamp, throwing its light upon and through those outward and surrounding circumstances, which alone biography and history for the most part present to us. Hard indeed is the work of a biographer, who seldom gives any distinct and tenable knowledge of the hero he describes. But he always, more or less well, and more or less unconsciously, does something towards painting himself. His mistakes and dreams as to another are the facts of his own mind. We see him living and moving at his easel, where he may be daubing only the cloudiest caricature of some one else. That which he ostensibly writes of is as worthless as the later text inscribed above the faded characters of a genuine classic. While he blabs mendacious gossip about the victim of his rhetoric, he betrays the whole secret, the imperishable reality, of his own character, aims, and insight. But when he writes, as Montaigne did, of himself, the dream, the delirium, the inane folly, is hardly less valuable than the earnest confession, the simple-hearted narrative of events. He may not always write truth and wisdom about his own temper, principles, and story; but the weaknesses and delusions are also his, his own, and alike contribute to embody before our eyes the one living human being.

On this topic, what a man is, more books have

been written than on all other matters, probably because, so far as we know, books are written by men. It lies at the root of all history, all poetry, and all that, in the highest sense of the word, is philosophy. But indeed, more properly speaking, it is of this matter, and this alone, that all books more or less directly treat, and about this that all thoughts are occupied. For speculations, the least apparently human, are in reality based on some portion or other of man, and on this alone; those as to reptiles, which may well concern man, himself a worm; those as to the earth we tread on, we being ourselves but dust and clay; those as to the air and stars, for what else are we but a breath, and our lives but sparks of fire in a vault of darkness? Nor can it be said that this is a fantastic abuse of metaphor. On this subject nothing properly is metaphor; for all analogies, even the wildest combinations twisted together by the fancy, have their one root in the unity of our consciousness. And in all we seek to know, our aim is only to discover what there is in the thing, corresponding to somewhat in ourselves. Thus we discern it; thus we master it, make it our own, truly know it. That in an object which answers to, or dovetails with ourselves, is what we really mean by the object. And manifestly so; for if there be aught in it which meets and assimilates with nothing in us, of that something, that algebraic x never to be

discovered, we cannot speak, or think, or dream. Not only do we not know it, but we never can know it. In this largest, but also most true sense then, it is certain that all books relate to man, and only to man; yet some to that which is more essential and characteristic in us, some to that which is less. Of some the ground and element lies nearer to our affections and will and intelligence, to that which is least changeable in us, and is the framework and support of all the rest; others to that which we cannot but regard as more outward and superficial. Some treat of man in his inmost life, beliefs, feelings, purposes, and successes; others more of the material world, which is also, but more remotely, his,—his colossal hut, and inexhaustible mine, and insatiable catacomb. In one way or other the strongest and most cutting thoughts of man, since the beginning of his current almanac and present calendar some five thousand years ago, have been exercised and expended in shaping out a clearer and clearer image of himself, both as he finds himself immediately within, and as he recognizes his own obscure likeness in the canvass of Nature, bordered with its frame of Time and Space, the carvings of which are also one endless intertexture of human resemblances. Much of the work of becoming what we may be, consists in knowing what we are; and we should go mad and rot in preternatural idleness, if we had not

the task of gradually finding ourselves expressed in the universe, and the universe impressed upon ourselves, and of more and more realizing this correspondence outwardly by action, whence arts, and trades, and journeys, and ships, and harvests,—and inwardly by thought and love, from which arise religions, poetry, sciences, all heroism and goodness.

Of the books that show us what we are, there have been in many ages better than the Essays of Montaigne; but it may be affirmed without meaning to offend any one, that even in our age there are several worse. His book is not the widest, nor the deepest; but it is a perfectly genuine record of a far livelier and richer and more honest mind than common. There are oracles of loftier and more fiery spirits, belonging less than this to our time and tendencies, and, though immortal as Death itself, which will outlive all but Life, yet not more deserving of immortality, than these doubts, fancies, endless egotisms, of a dead old Gascon gentleman.

Such he was. He acquaints us with man, chiefly by exhibiting to us a man, the offspring of one age, and the native of a single spot; and we must consider what these circumstances made him, that we may the better understand what in himself he was. He belonged, in a word, to the most active portion of the human race, in the most eager and productive period that it

has known, at least since it first contrived to shape itself into social existence. Printing, like the former and latter rain, was diffusing the knowledge long collected in the vague and dim clouds of the past. Columbus had burst the gates of the Atlantic, and shown to men a new heaven and a new earth, and other forms of human nature than those of our elder regions. And while the new was pouring in, the old was rapidly crumbling down and passing away. More connexion and interdependence was growing up in all the concerns of life. Individual strength and wild energy were settling down. The solid vault of dogma under which men lived was thinning off, and widening, and wavering; and while a new and bright vegetation of literature opened over the earth, the ancient snows and ice-rocks of tradition melted and burst along in foaming torrents. Together with these changes, a looser width of luxury and excitement was unfolded; and the sweeter wines of the new age were mingled with deadlier poisons. In Germany misery and fanaticism and heroic faith,—in Italy unbounded falsehood and creative genius,—in England lawless brutality and popular zeal,—in France all these elements, were mixed together. During the first half of the sixteenth century the Reformation began and was secured,—More and Cranmer were executed,—Luther lived and died,—Rabelais stood forth as a fervid genius in

the mask of a buffoon,—Raffaelle, Durer, and Michael Angelo painted themselves for ever on the most massive tablets of the mind of man,—Ariosto embalmed chivalry in a gorgeous tomb,—Fiesco conspired,—Machiavelli theorized,—Melanchthon and Scaliger taught,—Cortez and Pizarro passed, like its own earthquakes, through America,—the feudal greatness of French nobility blazed almost its last,—France, Germany, and Italy wore each other out in idle wars. In the midst of these confusions, Calvin was condemned by Rome as a heretic, for establishing the power which enabled him to burn Servetus. Rome was sacked by an army of adventurers, and Trent filled with a council of Romish prelates. Faith, energizing in Luther, threw off its cowl; and his Emperor, unable to compel him to wear it, placed it on his own head, and sank into a convent. The world was learning that Homer, Socrates, and Plutarch were more than names, and growing to feel what they really meant. And while Montaigne was drinking deepest of their spirit, the Protestants of Merindol and Cabrières were massacred; and in Guyenne, at his own threshold, the peasantry were maddened into revolt by the Gabelle (1548), and were crushed again under heavier sorrows.

In fine, the state of society in Western Europe resembled a party of mariners saving themselves on a raft constructed out of the wreck of their

former stately but worn-out vessel. With woes, and panic-cries, and bleeding hands, and fierce contentions, and the deaths of many, they construct a frail support amid the stormy waves; but the ruin of the ship has laid open to them precious treasures and priceless instruments, long sealed up and forgotten, within the hold; new necessities develop more complete inventions; the strong call of the hour awakens fresh life in many a heart, before weak and torpid; and on their creaking and wave-washed deck they sail before the wind in greater terrors, but with happier auspices than before.

In the midst of this revolution, Montaigne, born in 1533, rose to consciousness. In the course of his life he saw the world around him convulsed with the fiercest religious wars, the massacre of St. Bartholomew perpetrated, the Dutch republic created. He was contemporary with Cervantes and with Shakspere. Seldom has there been on earth a broader scene of apparent confusion; but in the midst of the storm far nobler and more various powers were at work, than in the downfall of the Roman Empire, or the conflicts of the middle ages. Much of household simplicity was perishing; popular fancy and feeling were losing much of their unconscious beauty; the rude and slow machinery of political society was breaking and crushing down; above all, the old unquestioned beliefs of men were

inwardly decaying, and were shaken and tottering under outward attacks. The fierce horrors, base frauds, and lascivious indulgences of public life, were rather multiplied and darkened than at all suppressed: yet thought and humanity were living more strongly, and generating life; and, in the confused and ferocious tumult, there were some who taught, and many who received the teaching, that faith in higher than visible things had a foundation of its own in the heart of man to rest on, and need not lean for ever on the hollow and spurious support of a despotic priesthood. But this last and greatest truth was preached in the midst of passions and delusions which were closely mingled with it, as the stream turned into a stagnant pool is itself stained by that which it purifies. Thus it might perhaps have been anticipated that, in the awakening knowledge of a beautiful and inexhaustible Pagan literature, self-satisfying speculation and easy sympathy would find abundant pretext and encouragement to shrink from the gigantic battle of austere belief and distinct principles into a world of intelligent delight. The survey of mankind, as a mere object of curious observation, both invited and bewildered the reason; and the richest and most many-coloured spectacle of human existence which the world had ever exhibited, was heightened and contrasted by a better knowledge of a remote and wonderful past.

Montaigne was the son of a Gascon country gentleman and soldier, rather a humourist, of whom he gives the following account (II. 2)*: "My house has been a long time open to men of learning, and is very well known by them; for my father, who was the master of it fifty years and more, being warmed with that zeal with which King Francis I. had newly embraced literature, and brought it into esteem, spared no pains nor expense to get an acquaintance with men of learning, treating them, at his house, as persons sacred, who had divine wisdom by some special inspiration, collecting their sentences and sayings as so many oracles, and with the more veneration and religion, as he was the less qualified to judge of them; for he had no knowledge of letters any more than his predecessors had."

The mode of education pursued by this somewhat singular person with regard to his second son is described by the subject of the experiment in the following passages (III. 13): "If I had any sons I should wish them my fortune. The good father that God gave me, who has nothing of me but the acknowledgment of his bounty (though truly 'tis a very hearty one), sent me from my cradle to be brought up in a poor village of his, and there continued me all the while I was

* The passages from Montaigne are given from the corrected edition of Cotton's translation, published in London in 1759.

at nurse, and longer, bringing me up to the meanest and most common way of living: *Magna pars libertatis est bene moratus venter* [Seneca Epist. 123] *i. e.* A well-governed belly is a great part of liberty. Never take upon yourselves, much less give up to your wives, the care of their nurture. Leave the forming them to fortune, under popular and natural laws; leave it to custom to train them up to frugality and hardships, that they may rather descend from them than ascend to them. This humour of my father's yet aimed at another end, that is, to make me familiar with those people and with that rank of men who most need our assistance; believing that I should be more obliged rather to regard them who extended their arms to me, than those who turned their backs upon me; and for this reason also it was that he provided me sureties at the font, of the meanest fortune, to oblige and bind me to them." And in I. 25: "My deceased father, having made all the inquiry that a man could possibly do among men of learning and understanding of an exact method of education, was by them apprized of the inconvenience which attended the practice at that time; and he was told that the tedious time we spent in learning the languages, which cost them but very little, if any, was the only reason we could not attain to the magnanimity of the ancient Greeks and Romans, nor to their knowledge. I do not however be-

lieve that to be the only cause; but the expedient my father found out for this was, that, while I was at nurse, and before I began to speak, he committed me to the care of a German, who since died a famous physician in France, totally ignorant of our language indeed, but very well versed in the Latin."

He proceeds to describe his learning Latin colloquially, and to a pitch of great fluency, even in childhood. We have afterwards several odd anecdotes and remarks about his own early life, the substance of which is that he was of very irretentive memory and indolent character, and that the desultory and amusing mode of instruction pursued with him even at college was, in Montaigne's opinion, requisite, in order to prevent so dull a mind from abhorring all serious mental labour.

The frame of the child thus trained and instructed was, as we find from frequent notices in his writings, robust and capable of much fatigue, although towards middle life afflicted with painful disease, the chronicle of which forms the bulk of his book of travels*. He was of short stature, but well set, and with a full, strong, and open face.

Montaigne, thus grew towards maturity, with

* 'Journal du Voyage de M. de Montaigne en Italie,' &c. par M. de Querlon. Paris, 1774. 4to.

an education more like that of our day than of his. In the management of those first years of life, it is impossible not to see the source of much that afterwards marked him out from others. The main principle, of teaching him everything without requiring any conscious effort, or producing any sense of struggle on his part, doubtless disinclined him, as such a system always must, to encounter hardships or engage in conflict: whence, partly, the indolence, though a busy indolence, of his life: hence too, in a great degree, his reluctance to admit any views of man and duty, which required him to regard life as a long battle against ignorance and weakness, in a word, against evil, and which estimate the highest and best of our thoughts and feelings as only then pure and active, when consciously toiling against the stream of self-indulgence. But as his education gave him, not only ease, but also knowledge, and opened to him an inexhaustible source of mental pleasure, no wonder that he became a literary epicure, and made the gratification of every whim in speculation, and to a great degree in practice, the only aim, if so it can be called, of his existence. Thanks however to the sound structure of mind and body, to the sturdy manly nature, which he partly inherited from his father, partly owed to his care,—to the strong and honest minds and the admirable books with which he was early familiarized,—there is under and around all

this capricious idleness a predominant, clear, homely sense and apprehensiveness for truth, accompanied by sincerity and kindliness of will, the natural yokefellows of such endowments, which give both the most sterling value and the most exquisite charm to his works.

At thirteen years of age his taste for study, and perhaps his dislike to military discipline and vexation, were so decided, that, although the son of a wealthy gentleman and soldier in the sixteenth century, he preferred the business of a law-court to that of a camp. After the requisite preparations he became, in the year 1554, a counsellor at Bordeaux, and he signs himself as such in writing to his father in 1563. He abandoned this profession on the death of his elder brother, which opened the way for his own succession. As, in so long and egotistical a work as the Essays, he never mentions the fact that he had been a lawyer, it seems probable that he felt somewhat ashamed of this portion of his life. Indeed he evidently valued himself a good deal on his importance as Seigneur of Montaigne, perhaps estimating more highly this external and unquestionable advantage, from his scepticism as to the certainty of any less palpable distinctions. Whatever his feelings may have been with regard to his own professional career, it is certain that he gained and kept a bitter and scornful disgust at the mass of arbitrary pedantries and cruel wrongs

involved in the system which then regulated the social interests of his countrymen.

During his life as counsellor he travelled frequently to Paris and to the Court. He became acquainted with Henry II., and was appointed a Gentleman of the Chamber. In general his remarks on politics exhibit much familiarity with the affairs and persons of his own time. He was intimate with L'Hospital and with De Thou, minds as impartial and honest probably as his own, but devoid of his speculative tendencies and powers, which were united with their practical talents and civil wisdom only in our Lord Bacon. Clear, kindly, festive was he as the Christmas fireside, and formed for sympathy and friendship. Of his life at Bordeaux, before his succession to his father's estate, the most important fact was his friendship with his fellow-counsellor La Boëtie, an affection which makes a streak of light in modern biography, almost as beautiful as that left us by Lord Brook and Sir Philip Sidney. Montaigne's letter to his father, giving an account of his friend's calm and considerate deathbed, is full of grief and love, as are all the passages in his Essays relating to the same person, who was of his own years, and whom he lost in the year 1563, when they were both about the age of thirty. La Boëtie also says, in his *Traité de la Servitude Volontaire** (p. 142), "Friendship

* La Mennais' edition, mentioned at the head of this article.

is a sacred name; it is a holy thing; it never arises but between good men, exists only by mutual esteem, supports itself not so much by services on either part, as by goodness of life. That which makes a friend certain of another, is the knowledge which he has of his integrity. The sureties which he has for him are his good disposition, fidelity, and stedfastness. There cannot be friendship where there is cruelty, where there is disloyalty, where there is injustice."

This little book, *De la Servitude Volontaire,* seems to have been written when the author was only sixteen. It is a declamation against the lawless government of many by one, with much that recals Tacitus, and something that resembles the political writings of our Milton, but having a pervading tone of idle imitative rhetoric, such as is all but inevitable in the work of one so young. Though doubtless in some degree prompted by the miseries of France in that day, it is chiefly a reproduction of the sonorous and statuesque republicanism of the classical writers, an eloquent, headlong, youthful utterance of a sharp, clear brain and glowing heart, to whom the world was yet but a stage for declamation, while almost all the outward facts of life lay concealed from him behind the scenic curtain. Warmth and reasonableness are finely blended in the book, though weakened by a kind of abstract vagueness, a dateless no-where-ness of the facts and topics.

There is no trace of the wayward, fantastic self-questioning, which gives charm and peculiarity to Montaigne. But probably at La Boëtie's age his friend's writings would have shown much less of this than now appears in them. For passionate life and keenness of style, the *Treatise* is more remarkable even than the *Essays*.

Montaigne married at thirty-three, not from any strong affection, but for reasons of propriety and convenience. After his father's death he lived chiefly at Montaigne St. Michel, his well-known chateau. He made frequent journeys in France, travelled in Italy, and was twice elected Mayor of Bordeaux, evidently much to his satisfaction. Though in troublesome times, his government of the city was, conformably to his character, quiet and moderate. He was also contemporary with the massacre of St. Bartholomew; and he was with De Thou at Blois in 1588, when the Duc de Guise was slain. The result for us of all these facts is, that Montaigne knew mankind on many sides, and in the most different classes. He was in a station to associate easily with the highest ranks, even with kings, and of habits and a temper that smoothed his intercourse even with the lowest. He had learning to make him an apt companion for scholars; practical shrewdness and knowledge to procure him respect from the world, and the secure and easy circumstances which gave him perfect leisure to indulge his tastes and fan-

cies, and to speculate upon those of others. And in fine, he was a man whose thoughts neither turned strongly to action nor to ideal truth, but delighted to converse with all kinds of distinct human realities.

In his writings the central scene of his outward life always appears to be his chateau, which he delights to paint as built mostly by his father, with nothing added to it by him,—as the only gentleman's house in France unfortified against either party in the civil war,—and as strong and hospitable enough to shelter his poorer neighbours against the mere marauders of the time. In a tower of this building was the study and library of Montaigne; and here he describes himself as composing the book in which the description occurs, and which is almost as certain to last as the nature of man, which it so amply and minutely presents to us.

Strange that by means of a little chemical mixture, lamp-black and so forth, on a tissue of old rags, the thoughts of a man should thus be preserved for all men. For what can seem a less suitable vehicle for a thought,—consider it,—a thought! than smoke-dirt and worn filaments of flax. These then perhaps are not that which makes the thought last, but that which lets us see that it does last, as the wire on which the insect's diamond wing is held under the glass of a microscope. Montaigne is gone, to where he will

have found some at least of his doubts cleared up. But for us he has left a mantle behind him, not only inscribed, as are the magic garments of romance, with many strange characters, but showing the familiar folds and twists of the short and stout-bodied old Gascon. In that mantle we need not wrap ourselves; but we may try to peruse and measure it. Thus it remains to us as a fact, that Montaigne did, what no man had done before, nor has any man so well done since,—in sharp light, and with endlessly daring strokes, painted himself, as the one great certainty in a world of doubt,—himself, a living being, a person, a man, bright shining, like an enchanted head,—a human image of brassy flame in Rembrandt's wizard cave of blackness.

Many have shown us man in general, and have done this better or worse, according to their several shares of manhood. But the mischief of such delineations is, that man in general is after all a fiction; for man exists only in particular. The essential forms and germs of our whole nature are stored indeed in every individual; and as the reason gradually awakens to the music of experience, a corresponding image becomes present to it of man as a single ideal being. But this image is always to some extent imperfect, and yet has a tendency to allure and even imprison our attention within itself, and to shut out

any entrances, or, if we may use the word, ingrowths, of further knowledge. And he before whom the image floats cloudy and pendulous, while, still indefinite and unsteady, it draws up, like a water-spout column, new substance of reality into its own bulk, often does better service to himself and others, than he who does homage to and worships a fixed idea, however noble and capacious, admitting of no growth or maturation. By the encyclopedic and interminable, as opposed to the defining, shaping process, we may well indeed become boundless, aimless, and incoherent. And so to a certain extent was Montaigne, but also rich, various, of inexhaustible yearnings after new mental treasures of comparisons and contrasts, and ever sending out his wealth possessed on new ventures of wealth to be acquired. He sits a golden gnome in his sparry cells and galleries piled with jewels; and he is their true discoverer and guardian, and, though not the creative spirit, with the one efficacious image of the Aladdin's Palace into which the jewels shall be built, is yet akin to him, and at heart owns him as a brother.

Great again is the power of a Dante, of a Shakspere, even of a Machiavelli, a De Thou, in showing us some shadows and surfaces of many men, some leaves of the great tree of man's life. But after all they can give us only lines and gleams, lines as of a withered leaf wasted to a

skeleton lace-leaf, gleams vague as those of forests seen through mist. To know what really is or has been, there is required an insight into the thing, such as these writers possessed, but cannot give. For it cannot be given, any more than a living eye of retina and nerve can be given to a head in the first construction of which it has been omitted. The insight must be found or won within: beaming, seeing from the heart, into the heart it looks. Now this in Montaigne we find; and the reality and meaning of this he has exemplified better than almost any one. His book, he tells us, is one about himself, and only about himself. All else, anecdote, speculation, narrative, is there only for this purpose. We have him before us in all his relations to others, in all his occupations, all his moods, and all his outward actions. What can be quoted of him gives as weak and dwarfed a notion of him, as a handful of dried leaves from an Indian forest can give of that gorgeous and exuberant world of foliage. But what else can we do? Thus we know (I. 1) that he was compassionate, but (I. 2) not subject to violent impulses of grief; that (I. 3), though of licentious speech, he was in some respects of sensitive modesty; and (I. 4) ready to trust, but too proud to do it when it could be attributed to despair and weakness, rather than to confidence and faith in another. He tells us (I. 8), "When I lately retired to my own house, with a resolu-

tion to avoid all manner of concern in affairs as much as possible, and to spend the small remainder of my life in privacy and peace, I fancied I could not give my mind more enjoyment than to leave it at full liberty to entertain, rest, and compose itself; which I also hoped that it might do the more easily henceforwards, as being by time become more settled and improved. But I find, *Variam semper dant otia mentem:* [Lucan, iv. 704.]

> Even in the most retired states
> A thousand thoughts an idle life creates:

that, on the contrary, like a horse broke loose, which runs away with greater speed than the rider would put him to, it gives birth to so many chimeras and fantastic monsters, one upon the neck of another, without order and design, that, for the sake of surveying the folly and absurdity of them when I list, I have begun to draw a catalogue of them, hoping in time to make my mind ashamed of itself."

He paints minutely (I. 9) his want of memory and his perfect veracity, and (I. 10) the absence of his mind, and its liability to quick movements and spurts of thoughts,—(I. 12) his dislike to ceremonies and love of politeness,—(I. 11 and I. 17) his disbelief in omens, presentiments, and ghosts. Elsewhere (as I. 18, &c.) he is full of a profound sense of the instability of all things human,—and (I. 19) shows himself to us as not

melancholy, yet ever thoughtful, and often meditating on death. In another place he thinks it worth mentioning (I. 35) that, although his countrymen generally wore coloured clothes, he seldom put on other than white or black, in imitation of his father. He tells us (I. 55) that he used perfumed gloves and handkerchiefs,—in another place that his doublet too was perfumed,—and he records (I. 56) that he constantly made the sign of the cross even when he yawned. The few following words have often been alluded to (II. 12): "When I play with my cat, who knows whether puss is not more diverted with me, than I am with puss? We divert each other reciprocally with monkey tricks."

We learn that he wore for his device a balance, with the characteristic motto, *Que sçay je.* He was vain of the order of St. Michael, which had been bestowed on him, and even, as appears from his travels, of his coat of arms, which he left showily emblazoned at different places on his road. He tells us (II. 25) that he always carried a stick in walking. Elsewhere he says (II. 17) that he was of low stature: "I am, as to the rest, strong and well-knit: my face is not puffed, but full; my complexion betwixt jovial and melancholic, moderately sanguine and hot, *Unde rigent setis mihi crura, et pectora villis:* my health vigorous and sprightly, even to a well-advanced age, and rarely troubled with sickness. Such I was, I

say; for I do not make any reckoning of myself, now that I am engaged in the advances of old age, being already past forty."

The man who writes so simply about such matters, rises in other places to a height of feeling almost lyrical, and to the noblest truth of thought, as when he says (I. 36): "Our judgements are sick, and conformable to the corruption of our manners. I observe, most of the wits of these times pretend to shine by obscuring the glory of the brave and generous actions of former ages, putting some vile construction upon them, and forging vain causes and motives of them. A mighty subtilty indeed! Show me the greatest and most unblemished action in life; and I will invent fifty bad ends to obscure it. God knows, whose intentions will extend them out to the full, what diversity of images our internal wills are liable to: they do not so maliciously play the censurers, as they do it ignorantly and rudely with their detraction. The same pains and license that others take to detract from these illustrious names, I would willingly take to lend them a lift to raise them higher. As for these rare figures that are culled out by the consent of the wisest men for an example to the world, I should not stick to honour them more, as far as my invention would permit, by the circumstances of favourable construction. And we are to believe that the force of our invention is infinitely short

of their merit. It is the duty of good men to paint virtue as beautiful as possible; and there would be no indecency in the case, should our passions a little transport us in favour of such sacred forms. What these people do to the contrary, they either do out of malice, or by the vice of confining their belief to their own capacity as aforesaid, or, which I am more inclined to think, for not having their sight strong, clear and elevated enough, to conceive the splendour of virtue in her native purity."

He shows his insight into style in speaking of a celebrated passage of Lucretius, (III. 5): "Those good poets stood in need of no smart subtle turn of phrase. Their language is copious, and full of a natural and constant spirit. 'Tis altogether epigrammatical; with a sting not only in the tail, but in the head, stomach, and feet. There is nothing forced in it, nothing drawling; and it ever keeps the same pace without variation. *Contextus totus virilis est; non sunt circa flosculos occupati.* [Seneca. Epist. 33.] *i. e.* The whole texture of it is manly, without the ornament of flowers. 'Tis not an eloquence that is delicate and inoffensive only: 'tis nervous and solid; and does not please only, but actually engrosses and captivates; and the finest understandings are the most charmed with it. When I see those sublime forms of expression so lively, so profound, I do not say 'tis well uttered, but well conceived. 'Tis

the sprightliness of the imagination that gives pomp and sublimity to the language. *Pectus est quod disertum facit.* [Quint. l. x.] *i. e.* Eloquence is owing to the frame of the mind. Our people call language judgement, and fine words full conceptions. This painting is not so much owing to the dexterity of hand, as to the lively impression of the object on the mind. . . . . The sense illuminates and produces the words, which are no longer words of air, but of flesh and bone. They signify more than they express. . . . The wits set off a language by their way of handling and managing it, not so much innovating it, as by putting it to more vigorous and various services, and straining and bending it to them. They do not introduce new terms into it; but they enrich those they have already, give them more weight, spirit, and energy; and add new turns, which are however authorized by the wise and ingenious application which they are not at a loss to make of them. This is the end which all should have in view, who are ambitious of the honour of writing well; and as for those who have not genius to attain to it, they ought to think of something else. . . . . We do not easily discern the energy of some of those words which I have selected, because he common use of them has, in some measure, impaired their beauty, and rendered it vulgar; as is the case in our common talk, wherein there are excellent phrases and metaphors, the

beauty of which is faded by their being antiquated, and their lustre sullied by too common handling. But this abates nothing of the relish to men of understanding; neither does it derogate from the glory of those ancient authors, who, 'tis likely, first brought those words into that lustre."

There are perhaps few better specimens at once of his manner and his sagacity than the following passage (III. 11): "I have seen the birth of many miracles of my time, which, although they were still-born, yet have we not failed to foresee what they would have come to had they lived. It is but finding the end of the clue, and a man may wind off as much as he will; and there is a greater distance betwixt nothing and the minutest thing in the world, than there is betwixt that and the greatest. Now the first that are tinctured with this beginning of novelty, when they set out their history, find, by the opposition they meet with, where the difficulty of persuasion lies, and caulk that place with some false piece. Besides that *Insita hominibus libidine alendi de industria rumores*, men having a natural lust to propagate reports, we naturally make a conscience of restoring what has been lent us, without some usury and addition of our own invention. Private error first creates public error; and afterwards in turn public error causes a particular one: thus all this fabric rises by patch-work from hand to hand, so that the remotest witness knows more

than those that are nearest; and the last informed is more certain than the first. 'Tis a natural progress: for whoever believes anything thinks it a work of charity to persuade another into the same opinion. Which the better to do, he will make no difficulty of adding as much of his own invention as he conceives necessary to obviate the resistance or want of conception he supposes in others. I myself, who make a particular conscience of lying, and am not very solicitous of gaining credit and authority to what I say, do yet find, that in the arguments I have in hand, being warmed with the opposition of another, or by the proper heat of my own narration, I swell and puff up my subject by voice, motion, vigour, and force of words, and moreover by extension and amplification, not without prejudice to the naked truth: but I do it on condition nevertheless, that to the first who brings me to recollection, and who asks me the plain and real truth, I presently surrender, and deliver it to him without exaggeration, without emphasis or interlarding of my own. A quick and earnest way of speaking as mine is, is apt to run into hyperbole. There is nothing to which men commonly are more inclined, than to give way to their own opinions. Where the ordinary means fail us, we add command and force, fire and sword. 'Tis a misfortune to be at that pass, that the best touchstone of the truth must be the multitude of

believers, in a crowd where the number of fools so much exceeds the wise. *Quasi vero quidquam sit tam valde, quam nihil sapere, vulgare. Sanitatis patrocinium est insanientium turba.* [Cicero de Div. lib. ii., c. 39. Item Aug. de Civit. Dei. l. vi., c. 10.] *i. e.* As if anything were so common as ignorance. The mob of fools is a protection to the wise. 'Tis hard for a man to form his judgement against the common opinions. The first persuasion taken of the very subject itself possesses the simple; and from that it spreads to the wise, by the authority of the number and the antiquity of the witnesses. For my part, what I should not believe from one, I should not believe from a hundred; and I do not judge of opinions by the years . . . . . To this very hour all these miracles and strange events have concealed themselves from me; I have never seen a more evident monster or miracle in the world than myself: a man grows familiar with all strange things by time and custom; but the more I visit, and the better I know myself, the more does my own deformity astonish me, and the less I understand of myself." And afterwards (III. 13) much to the same effect: "In my opinion, of the most ordinary, common, and known things, could we but penetrate them, the greatest miracles of nature might be formed, and the most wonderful examples, especially upon the subject of human actions."

There are few thoughts in systematic thinkers, that go deeper than the following remark of Montaigne, which is the more striking as found in one so immethodical, and so averse from complete schemes of theory (III. 1): "Our structure both external and internal, is full of imperfection: yet there is nothing in nature but what is of use, not even inutility itself. There is nothing in this universe, which has not some proper place in it. Our being is cemented with certain scurvy qualities: ambition, jealousy, envy, revenge, superstition, despair, have so natural a lodgement in us, that the image of them is discerned in the brute beasts: nay cruelty itself, a vice so much out of nature; for even in the midst of compassion we feel within us an unaccountable bitter-sweet titillation of ill-natured pleasure in seeing another suffer; and even children are sensible of it.

> *'Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,*
> *E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem.'*
> 'Tis sweet from land to see a storm at sea,
> And others sinking whilst ourselves are free.'

Whoever should divest man of the seeds of such qualities would destroy the fundamental conditions of human life."

These extracts may be fitly concluded with the following true as well as characteristic aphorism, (III. 2): "'Tis all one; all moral philosophy is as applicable to a vulgar and private life as to the most splendid. Every man carries the entire form of the human condition."

Such, in some faint traits and fragments, taken directly from himself, is a rude shadow of Montaigne. He was unquestionably a large-minded, clear, and healthy man. For almost every kind of human existence he had sympathy and love, and understood much of its scheme and tendencies, keeping himself unshaken and distinct in the midst of it. That was a rare intelligence and kindliness of heart, which in his age could make a man anticipate so much of the practical wisdom of later times,—reprobating torture, and all cruel modes of capital punishment,—lamenting loudly the treatment of savage nations by Europeans,—seeing through all the pretexts for courtly profusion, and condemning it, although himself a courtier and holding a place, as mere reckless cruelty to the people. He also utterly disbelieved the whole train of magical wonders, ghosts, material visions, witchcraft, and such other blundering modes of representing the supernatural by distorting and interrupting nature. This view of him, on the unquestionable evidence of his own writings, which on these points are most uniformly consistent, seems to fall in with all the other evidence which his whole works and life, and his own open-hearted statements, furnish of his remarkable and unvarying honesty. For he who admits falsehood into the inner chambers of the heart, and among his household gods, can seldom fail to have some lurking fancy

of a fundamental ground of disorder and confusion as the basis of the universe, and hence almost inevitably believes in the fashionable delusions of his day, whatever they may be. Vain dream of quacks and of their dupes, that a man, by being a quack, loses all belief in quackery! Knowing that his own pretences are false, he has the more credulity to spare for those of others. He who passes false coin is the more, not the less likely to be taken in by sham jewels offered cheap, or by any other temptation suitable to his greediness and his self-complacent cunning. All swindlers are in truth, by the nature of the case, members of a joint-stock company for mutual deception. Moreover this thorough honesty of Montaigne is hardly separable from clear sagacity, combined with genuine sympathy such as his. The mirror of the true mind faithfully represented the true realities presented to it; for it was neither muffled up by a veil of selfishness, nor cracked by passion, nor painted over with a tawdry coat of ostentatious conceits and follies. Wherever no one of these things happens, and the mind is vividly awake and active, there will be accurate and stedfast knowledge of all that lies nearest to the man, and most concerns his work on earth. And this attainment we find characteristically marked and certain in Montaigne, whose judgements on public affairs, on education, on diversities of character, and on

literature, are always instructive or suggestive, however imperfect.

Doubtless no allegations of wisdom on some points can meet the charges against Montaigne of frequent inconsistencies and of fundamental scepticism. The occasional self-contradiction, in a man who writes so much from the fancy of the moment, is not wonderful. But even of this there is less than might be supposed. Indeed, if the man or his book were a mere bundle of unconnected livelinesses and sparkles of thought, either would be nearly as worthless as the dullest heap of trivialities. A man without character, and a type of thought of his own, may appear to be many things, but in reality is little more than nothing. Bnt a oneness with many sides to it, and capable of quick revolution and transformation, is a more vital and productive thing, than the stagnant and staring singleness of aims and habits, which the meanest minds can understand and measure.

Of his scepticism something more must be said. That Montaigne was a sceptic, in the sense of finding all the theories he knew of, which profess to systematize the whole of human life, scanty and frail, there can be no doubt. That he was wrong in this decision, no man of strong and cultivated speculative powers will now maintain. But his error seems to be, that he had no faith in the reasonableness of the attempt. The philosophy

known in his time was ill calculated to convert him. That of antiquity was very imperfectly understood, and had been produced under obsolete circumstances and conditions, and could no longer answer the demands of later experience. It must also be said that he had never passed through any really methodical course of philosophical inquiry, nor undergone any accurate scientific discipline. The current religious opinions, which he by no means opposed, might have seemed likely to bring him in contact with a large scheme of speculative theology, constructed chiefly by the schoolmen. But this system of doctrine, whether Romanist or Protestant, was little fitted to meet the wishes of a mind like his; for, under the name and sacred attributes of Revelation, it admitted a cumbrous element of what was purely arbitrary and capricious. And attempting to combine this with the facts of life, and the principles of mere intelligence, it produced a discordant compound, obviously unstable and inadequate. The truth is, that any philosophical scheme of the world known to him, perhaps any conceivable one, must necessarily have seemed as idle and vain, as would the tissue of cobwebs on the vaults and pillars of some noble building, if offered as a sufficient diagram and explanation of the principles of its construction.

The chief document on the subject of his philo-

sophical opinions, or rather of his opinions about philosophy, is the celebrated *Apology for Raymond de Sebonde* (Essays II. 12). This writer had taken the sum of the current opinions of the day, and had attempted to justify them by arguments of mere speculation from the premises of human experience. A perilous and fantastic attempt, in which it would have been well had he considered that nothing can be understood and maintained, except in reference to the causes and conditions by which it has arisen; that therefore, as the religious creed of his day had been partly the product of a tradition grounded in foreign and ancient modes of thought and feeling, partly of the metaphysical science of intermediate times, partly of accident and caprice, it would have been a miracle far greater than any of those which he vindicated, had it been found, as he asserted, in strict correspondence with the principles of universal reason, and the demands of human nature through the whole series of ages. It would have been well had he known that the existence of an absolute and eternal element in the vague and shifting mass of the common beliefs,—which is all that religion requires, all that philosophy can grant,—is only to be defended by the admission, or rather the declaration, that there is also in it a vesture liable to decay, and a body doomed to death. It is also unfortunate for Raymond not to have so clearly read himself,

as to see that the task he had undertaken was one giving room and occasion beyond all others for the exercise of lawless ingenuity, and the mad attempt to harness and guide assumptions and sophisms in the path of Truth, which admits of no such service. The work of any man in any age, who attempts such an enterprise, must needs resemble a *mirage* landscape of Egypt, interspersed among, and partly reflecting, partly obscuring, granite temples and marble gods, but itself an airy, fleeting vision. Reason may well, as in mathematical science, give, after the lapse of centuries, a final decision in favour of its own slow results,—or attain at last an insight into the laws and being of great facts, such as the system of the stars, or the moral and physical structure of man: but that it should conclusively and for ever be able to ratify a huge medley of feelings, speculations, and legends, such as was called in the middle ages the orthodox faith, and render these imperative through eternity,—this can be credited only by a mind weakened and heated by the lust for wonder, or lost for the time in the labyrinth of its own subtilty, or, in distrust of reason, leaning terror-stricken on any most hopeless substitute for it.

The argument of Montaigne however is for the most part independent of the peculiar line of reasoning adopted by De Sebonde. For the main purport of his Essay is not so much to

justify the topics of his author, as to maintain that, however unsatisfactory these may be, human thought, without admitting the idea of a positive and outward revelation, can form no more enduring scheme. The whole matter indeed is probably handled only for the purpose of accumulating objections to the theories of all the philosophical schools which Montaigne knew of. In this, though always lively and striking, he is comparatively unsuccessful, partly from ignorance of the doctrines he refers to, which he has caught at chiefly in fragments, and by way of anecdote, but still more from the want of genuine philosophical capacity. This may perhaps be generalized under the larger term of Reason in its highest being,—of the power which beholds and converses with supersensual and universal realities. These, apprehended by the intellect, are philosophic truths, or first principles,—embraced, reverenced, and obeyed by the will, are laws of duty,—relied on and worshipped by the heart, are objects of religion,—and embodied in beautiful symbols, are the deified forms of the imagination, and haunt and spiritualize the highest poetry. Now this manifold but one power, which is nothing less or other than the spirit or life of man in its loftiest energy, Montaigne did not in any ample degree possess. Had it existed more fully in him, though he might have rejected as insufficient all actual philosophies, yet, sup-

posing him to have remained the same in type of character, and to have made reflection,—as he did make it,—his chief business, he would inevitably have believed in and prophesied a future and more perfect philosophy, even if he had not been able to create it.

The proof that he was not remarkably under the guidance of this Daimon or Genius may perhaps be strengthened, for those who need such evidences, by the fact that, in the midst of much light and playful writing, of many comic stories and abundant wit, he displays no trace of humour, such as glorifies the much dulness and almost transmutes the filth of Rabelais. It is the characteristic office of humour to exhibit earnest feelings and deep thoughts in grotesque, often in extravagant and monstrous forms, such as outwardly contrast the most with that of which they are the vehicle, and by the sense of this opposition heighten and sharpen the effect of that which moves and lives within. It is not in any eminent degree a French faculty; and the greatest comic writers of France since Rabelais, to wit, Molière and Voltaire, both of whom in their shrewd and cunning sarcasm Montaigne somewhat resembles, hardly exhibit a trace of it.

But with this deficiency in Montaigne, and with the fact that in him, as in all, the negative side of the mind is the weak and ungenial one, it is unfair to say that there was either an entire

denial of the possibility of speculative truth for man, or indifference to those who sought it. Of all authors his favourite is Plutarch, the zealous guardian of the trophies of the men of old, and burner of incense at the tombs of heroes and of sages, in whom the conviction of the triumphant efficacy of thought had the warmth of a passion as well as the clearness of an idea. Of all men the one whom he seems most thoroughly to have revered and loved is the saint, prophet, and martyr of Pagan wisdom, Socrates. It may indeed be doubted how much he steadily understood of the greatness of the best Athenian. But it is very remarkable that with such entire sincerity and fervour he selected him for his full admiration and love. For Montaigne lived in an age when pompous dogmas and empty speculations were mingled with a strong and fiery, but indistinct element of pure religious faith; when morals were to a great extent sunk in gross indulgence, corrected by harsh and glaring dashes of monkish severity; and when many men were practically and most memorably great, with little or no comprehension of the real value and tendency of their own lives. In this glittering and smoky tumult, the Gascon did not pretend to offer any remedy for the evils of the time, or to be able to harmonize the piercing tones and thunders of its discords. He lived an off-hand life, and painted it with sudden and shifting colours. Yet that a

deeper sense was hidden in him of a truth and adamantine system, at the base of the world's confusions, and of his own levities, seems proved, not only by the impression of his works as a whole, but by his reverential admiration for the great master of Grecian thought. Socrates too lived in a time when many minds were sick, struggling, and half delirious, when the simple dignity of earlier days was no longer possible, when men had begun to think of themselves and their own nature, and sophists were teaching the comfortable lesson that all things are mere concrete falsehood, and that to live by lies, and think for gain and glory, was the noblest work of man. In an earlier time Socrates would probably have been contented to be the Solon or the Aristides of his country,—a character in which some of his noblest endowments could not have been developed, and his intuition into the deepest heart of things would have slumbered; a character also of homely, unspeculative superiority, which could not have made him what he was, the greatest fact in an age of refinements and dialectics. But the diseases of thought could only be cured by purer and mightier thought: and it was the task of Socrates to do this, not merely for his own, but for all time. Moreover, in setting forth by word and deed the reality of truth and heroic goodness, against the mere greedy appetite for pleasure, to which the

sophists made their cleverness subservient, he exhibited the freshest, liveliest, least affected image of a reasonable, generous man that ever brightened the Pagan world. Stedfast and complete was he as this round earth, abundant and living as the summer. The perennial glow and upward strivings of innumerable hearts down to this hour,—the faith in the certainty of reason,—the knowledge that we do not live in a heap of disorders, but in a world of intelligence and good, —these we owe in a higher degree to him, than to any native of this western continent. It would be hard to estimate how much of the best wisdom and the warmest hopes that inspire the souls of all men, are owing to the poor murdered Athenian, whose life was a long assertion of conscience against quackery, and his death its triumph over the folly of the men whom he so faithfully served and loved. The silent tear in the secret chamber, —the calm resolution of meditative sympathy to go and do likewise,—the purpose in other hearts to live like him for duty, and not for profit or praise, —these are his right and imperishable honours. But honour be also in his smaller measure to the slight capricious Frenchman, who, among fierce sects and the breaking forth of the great deeps of opinion and of denial,—in the midst of his own follies and inconsistencies, and with no distinct or firm view of that scheme of the supersensual in the centre of which he fretted and

indulged himself,—yet had honesty and warmth of soul to see in Socrates a victorious witness for the grandeur and lastingness of truth*.

Socrates was put to death on a charge of irreligion; and many words have been expended, perhaps a few wasted, on the question, whether his French eulogist is or is not liable to the same accusation. Did Montaigne believe Christianity? A compendious question, which would be clear enough to admit of an answer, if we only knew what is meant by belief, and what by Christianity. Sad is the condition of a talker in drawing-rooms, very sad that of a writer of dissertations, who attempts to answer a question before he knows the meaning of it. Man in such a case, though the highest of earthly beings, is a sight painful to mortal eyes, and which might almost draw the softest tears from behind the hardest of spectacles. In the answers that have been given to the categorical demand touching the faith of Montaigne, something of this darkness is perhaps discernible. But it may safely be affirmed, that, if by unbelief be meant the opinion that Christianity is, like the Art of Cagliostro or the Narrative of Psalmanazar, a pure fiction, a conscious work of some one's fancy, and that it no more concerns us than judicial astrology or the oracles of Augurs, which seems to

* See the Essays *passim*, but especially III. 12.

have been the pithy doctrine of Hume and Voltaire, then doubtless in this way, and to this extent, Montaigne was not an unbeliever. If on the other hand belief is the acknowledgement that a certain set of propositions have been committed by irresistible power to the keeping of a certain caste of men, on the acquiescence in which statements, and the submission to which men, our eternal weal or woe is made dependent,—with the proviso that the doctrines themselves and the commission of the teachers are not to be scrutinized at all, or to be in any way connected with the results of our experience or the principles of our reason,—then, in this sense, Montaigne believed. Nay, in the bewilderment of his misunderstanding at the immensity and seeming contradictions of the universe, perhaps he even hoped that one day or other the puzzle of existence would find its solution in the accompanying puzzle of Revelation. But if Christianity be regarded, not as an arbitrary puzzle, but as a necessary mystery, that is, a truth dark to the careless and unprepared eye, but luminous and the light of all things to the spirit purified by love of God, and by entire self-sacrifice,—as a truth founded in the nature of man, claimed by his noblest wants, manifested by the full harmony of all his powers, and by their triumph over inward and outward disturbances and desolations, completely realized in the Saviour, and attainable

for all by the heartfelt recognition of it in him,—this is a Christianity of which Montaigne had not only no belief, but no conception. Again, if faith be not a blind and desperate clutching to an unknown somewhat, like the drowning man's grasp at any object near him, though it be the shark's jaw, or the dagger of the sword-fish,—if it be anything more and better than a voluntary relinquishing of all voluntary action under the name of obedience,—if it be the affectionate and loyal adherence of the heart to the truths of reason, which the passions and selfishness tempt us to deny,—then it is a power of which Montaigne had experienced but little, and which he did not at all understand. All that we find in him of Christianity would be suitable to apes and dogs, rather than to rational and moral beings.

It is however to be desired that he should be treated with justice, if not for his sake, yet for ours. He was not, in any high, pure sense, a religious man; but he was honest, clear-sighted, and affectionate. Nothing human was for him without a meaning and a value; and he cherished, in the midst of his vanities and inconsistencies, a cheerful conviction that goodness and wisdom do some how or other preside over this black and cloudy web of things. He walked indeed in a circle of darkness, within which his little world of life and light burnt like a lantern: but, as he

moved along, the darkness kindled round him, and showed itself to be but a dormant light. For human existence was to him itself a lucid thing, often broken indeed, and wavering, but still bright and radiant. To him it was joy and hope to live our common life; and the healthy freshness and vigour of all his emotions and perceptions required no aid of creative imagination or brooding reflection to give them worth and beauty. For him the earth, which had swallowed so many generations, and suffered so many wounds, was green and prosperous. The sky, battered and pierced by so many mad wishes, fruitless prayers, and airy pinnacles of visions which had passed away, bent smoothly and securely over him, and smiled with crystalline azure. To be alive, and man,—to see, to feel, to walk, to think, to read Plutarch, or hunt over the plains of Périgord, filled him with the buoyancy of childhood. The human faces of ruined or plague-struck peasants, of the citizens of Bordeaux, of the people of Paris, of the nobles and dames of France, stamped as all were with stories of folly and suffering, yet had also a precious import as the countenances of men, and won from him an eager sympathy. From this fellow-feeling of brotherhood, the grey old earth, with the infinity of space above, and the immeasurable grave below, had for him beauty and sweetness and elastic gladness. And his brain,

wondering and growing weary at the spectacle of history, to him a long riddle, poised itself and rested softly in the book-tower of his chateau, with the memory of La Boëtie, the presence of the wise men of old, and the anticipated kindness of his own and of all future times. Sceptic as he was, the dark and ulcered scepticism of a later age was unknown to him. The towered landscape of Greece and Rome had been disclosed anew before him and his generation. The expanse of the future was bursting open with the clash and storm-music of battles; and he knew not how much or how little to expect from the change, but felt that there was dew and bloom for him upon the near and friendly soil on which he set his foot.

Weak, no doubt, and dim and hazy must the best image appear to us, that we can now recover of a man who lived three hundred years ago. The past exists indeed, imperishable, unchangeable; but it seems to flit away from us into a gulf of shadows: and we can hardly satisfy ourselves that it ever has been the throbbing, bright-eyed thing, that we call Now. But that Now, even while we write it, stiffens to a mummy in the memory, melts in the fancy to a spectre, and is nowhere to be seen as what it was. Thus, not only the sunny statuary of Grecian life, the clanging stride of Rome, the high-hearted ferment of pride and gracefulness and faith in the

middle ages, are worn away to ghostly emptiness; but we too, and our full uneasy existence, are slipping away from ourselves into the same vague twilight. It is not only Montaigne, who pines and decays into a name and an effigy; but those who read of him, and he who writes. Obscure as he hovers before us, shall we appear at a coming age; and palpable and bold as we now are, so once was he, and that departed world of thought and feeling, in which he moved and enjoyed, and at last vanished into dust and dreams.

The fact of the outward material existence of any one long gone by,—of his having been like us a creature of flesh and blood, of heart and brain, of days and moments, of birth and death, and sorrow and endless hopes,—is sometimes more distinctly brought home to us by the sight, or even the report, of any definite fact or object connected with him and still remaining. So is it with the autograph of Shakspere in Florio's old translation of Montaigne; and so, still more strikingly, with the house in which Montaigne dwelt, and which he has described, and which still stands as in his days, in an unfrequented nook in the country of Périgord. It happens that there is an unpublished narrative of a visit to the spot, by a young man who was at one time supposed capable of a future improvement in practical sense and worldly respectability, such as he is far from having realized. He has however, or at least

had, a rude and awkward propensity for opening his eyes and describing what he saw, the fruits of which, on this particular occasion, may here be presented. The narrative will form a slovenly kind of appendage to this ragged scarecrow image of a notable man.

"Sept. 21, 18—.—I left Bordeaux yesterday, with my chivalrous and melancholy companion, for Libourne on the Dordogne, and drove the whole way through a flat and richly cultivated country with a good many trees. It was dark when we reached the banks of the river, at seven in the evening; and we saw the water gleaming under us as we drove over the bridge with the lights of the town in front. We soon reached our hotel, called *Des Princes*, where we slept. This morning we rose in good time, breakfasted, and started at a few minutes after eight, in a light calèche, for Castillon, which lies up the river, on the same side as Libourne. The road is flat, and the river not in sight; but the country looks extremely rich and prosperous, with a profusion of scattered trees, and with some pleasant rising grounds on the opposite side of the road to that on which the Dordogne lies. The sun was shining brightly, though with a good many clouds about the sky; and the air was peculiarly clear, so that every tree and plant, and even the single vine-leaves, were beautifully distinct and vivid. It was a pleasure to see the solid-looking, white houses, with the sharp scalloped shadows of the eaves. Every labourer's face under his broad straw hat had a strong shadow thrown as far as the upper-lip. Sometimes a withered bright red leaf on the summit of a vine-spray, with the light glowing through it, looked as brilliant as the ruby glass of an old cathedral window. The vines themselves were of more picturesque growth than about Bordeaux, rising to a much greater height round pointed poles, and pushing out their young boughs of pale green in bacchanal liberty. The black

bunches were the largest and most massive I ever saw, and seemed to promise the strength which is said to characterize the wines of this district, called from the little town of St. Emilion, on the ridge to the north of the river. There was generally a sparkling crispness about the views, a softness in the air, and over the country an appearance of ease and substantial wealth, which were very animating. Castillon, four or five leagues from Libourne, is a much smaller town, with some remains of antiquity in its appearance. Close to it was fought the battle which deprived the English of Guyenne, and in which the two Talbots fell. Here we exchanged our calèche for a small charabanc with one horse, which took us to Montaigne St. Michel, along a detestable road, mostly somewhat ascending. We found the higher ground to be a wide, broken plain, out of sight of the Dordogne, and studded with small stone windmills, each carrying a conical roof.

"The first memorial of the days of Montaigne which we discovered, was the parish church, a very old building. There is a massive square tower covered by a slightly pointed roof, and having two large openings near its summit in each side, which look like windows, but are without shafts, and seem to distinguish a good deal of the church architecture of the neighbourhood. There is a round apsis beyond the tower at the east end, with only two small loophole windows; and at the west end is raised a small curiously complicated wooden superstructure, designed to contain the bell of a large clock, to which access is obtained by a rude external wooden gallery, painted red, and stretching all the length of the body of the church, close under the eaves. From this building runs a straight road, perhaps a quarter of a mile long, to the chateau.

"The part of Montaigne's house which we first reached, was the tower described by him in his Essay *On the Three Commerces* (III. 3.), as containing his library and study. It is a plain, round structure, at the south-eastern corner of the chateau; a dead wall runs from it on each side, at right angles, and rises to about half its height. This is in reality the exterior of ranges of outbuildings, which form

two sides of the court-yard. In this wall, close to the tower, and facing us as we approached, was a small gate, through which we found entrance. The chateau itself was now on our left, running along the western side of the quadrangle. It is a high building of grey stone, evidently very ancient, and probably untouched, except for repairs, since the days of Montaigne's father. There are a considerable number of windows scattered very irregularly over the front. Near the middle at each side of the small unornamented entrance are two large and high towers of unlike architecture; the one with deep machicolations, the other without them, and both with conical roofs. If erected, as I presume, by Montaigne's father, the building must be about three hundred years old: the whole place has now an air of sluttish neglect, though not at all of decay. It is now inhabited by an old gentleman, formerly a military man, whose civility we should ill repay by recording any idle accounts of his simple establishment and very agreeable conversation. The house is only one room deep; and behind it runs along and broad terrace, covered with grass, and with some trees growing upon it, among others a large horse-chesnut. It is bordered by a stone balustrade, which rises on the edge of a steep, wooded bank, and has beyond it a very extensive prospect over a flat country, with slight eminences on the horizon, marked towards the north by the village and chateau of Mont Peyroux, which in Montaigne's day was a sort of dependence on his seigneurie, and belonged to his younger brother. Near it, and still higher against the sky, are the ruins of the chateau of Gurson, destroyed in the Revolution, and which seems to have been a castle in our English sense of the word, that is, a feudal abode constructed for defence. It was probably the residence of the lady to whom Montaigne addresses his *Essay on Education* (I. 25). The whole prospect is woody and cultivated, but without water, or any very remarkable outlines, open, airy, quiet, and sufficiently prosperous. The old gentleman told us that he was possessed of eleven *métairies* or farms with the chateau, but that Montaigne

had held eighteen. The property had come by marriage to the Ségur family, who had taken the name of Ségur de Montaigne. They sold the estate to the present owner, who in turn was ready to dispose of it, if he could find a purchaser.

"After taking leave of our host we returned to the corner tower, which we examined throughout, and were much interested by the minute agreement of its present state with everything recorded in Montaigne's description. This too was evidently not a modern and factitious correspondence, but secured by the abstinence of the successive owners from any changes, however slight. The ground floor retains the appearance of having once been a small chapel, though now dark and dilapidated. The first floor, which was the sleeping-apartment of the Gascon philosopher, does not look as if it had been applied since his day to any other purpose. The third and last story is that so particularly described by its occupant, as having contained his library and study. These are his words (III. 3): 'When I am at home I the oftener visit my library, from which I at once survey all the operations of my family. 'Tis over the entrance into my house, from whence I have a view under me of my court-yards and garden, and of most of the offices of my house. There I turn over one book, then another, on various subjects, without order, and without design. One while I ruminate; another while I copy and dictate, as I walk to and fro, such whimsies as these in my Essays. 'Tis in the third story of a tower, of which the first is my chapel, the second a chamber and its closets, where I often lie to be retired; above it is a great wardrobe. This was formerly the most useless part of my house. I there pass away the most of the days of my life, and most of the hours in the day, but am never there at night. At the end of it there is a very neat closet, with pleasant window-lights, and a fire-place. And was I not more afraid of the trouble than of the expense, —the trouble which drives me from all application to business,—I could easily join to it on each side, and on the same floor, a gallery of 100 paces in length, and 12 in

breadth; there being walls already raised, though for another design, to the height that is requisite. Every retired place should have a walk in it; for if I sit still, my thoughts sleep; my fancy does not operate so well, as when 'tis put in motion by that of my legs. They who study without a book are all in the same condition. The form of my study is round, and has no more straight than what is taken up by my table and chair, so that the curve presents me with a view of all my books, in five rows of shelves, quite round me. It has three noble and free prospects, and is 16 paces in the diameter. I am not so continually there in the winter; for my house is perched upon an eminence, as its name imports; and this part of it is most exposed to the wind, which pleases me the better, for not being so easy of access, and a little remote, as well for the benefit of exercise as for being more retired. 'Tis there that I am in my kingdom, as we say; and there I endeavour to render myself sole monarch, and to sequester this corner from all society,—conjugal, filial, and civil.'

"This passage would answer in most respects as a description of the spot at this hour, though he who wrote it has been dead two hundred and fifty years. The room still overlooks the entrance of the chateau, and, from three windows in different sides of the circuit, commands the garden, the court, the house, and the outhouses. The books indeed are gone; but the many small rafters of the roof are inscribed on their lower faces with mottoes and pithy sentences, which recall, as by a living voice, the favourite studies and thoughts of Montaigne. Such are these few hastily transcribed in a note-book. '1. *Solum certum nihil esse certi; et homine nihil miserius aut superbius.* 2. Ἄλλοισιν ἄλλου θεῶν τε κἀνθρώπων μέλει. 3. Ταράσσει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους οὐ τὰ γράμματα, ἀλλὰ τὰ περὶ τῶν γραμμάτων δόγματα. 4. *Quid superbis, terra et cinis!* Eccl. x. 5. *Vae qui sapientes estis in oculis vestris.* Eccl. v. 6. *Favere jucunde praesentibus. Caetera extra te.* 7. Παντὶ λόγῳ λόγος ἴσος ἀντίκειται. 8. *Nostra vagatur in tenebris, nec caeca potest mens cornere verum.* 9. *Fecit Deus hominem similem umbrae post solis occasum.* Eccl. vii.'

"The chapel still shows the recess, where stood the altar; and there are the remains of colours and gilding on the defaced coats of arms around the walls. The bedroom floor presents nothing remarkable; but that above, in which are the inscriptions on its rafters, preserves the exact form described by its ancient occupant. The paces of Montaigne must have been of about a foot and a half; for the diameter of the tower inside is about twenty-four feet. The circle is at one part cut by two straight walls, joining in an angle, being the portion which he speaks of as adapted for his seat and table. The three windows, affording a rich and free prospect, are still unchanged. There is a sort of closet opening off the room, with the traces of painted ornaments on the wall, a fire-place, as he mentions, at one end, and a window, which entitles it to be spoken of as *très plaisamment percé*,—having a pleasant window-light,—and which, though directly overlooking the court-yard, furnishes a view, above the northern line of offices, towards Mont Peyroux and Gurson.

"The whole appearance and position of this apartment seem especially characteristic of Montaigne. The cheerfulness, the airiness, the quiet, the constant though somewhat remote view of natural objects, and of the far-spread and busy occupations of men,—all are suitable to him. The ornamenting the joists of his chamber-roof with several scores of moral sentences was the work of a speculative idler; and their purport is always, so far as I saw, suitable to his sceptical but humane and indulgent temper. The neglect of all elegance and modern convenience in the house, together with its perfect preservation from decay, add to the interest, and seem to prove that it is maintained in its old completeness and bareness, not from any notion of use, but out of respect for the memory of its celebrated owner."

Simonidis Cei Carminum Reliquiae. Edidit Dr. F. G. Schneidewin.

(From the London and Westminster Review for 1838.*)*

THIS is a very careful and intelligent edition of the remains of one of the greatest Grecian poets, of whom however unhappily little more than couplets, quatrains, and fragments are now extant. He composed long lyric poems; but no one of these now exists entire; nor have we more than twenty-five continuous lines of his composition, and only in two instances nearly so many. Of distichs however, and short inscriptions, a considerable number are preserved. The fate of his works thus is much as if a sculptor had wrought both statues and gems, and many of the more minute performances remained uninjured, while of the larger none were found unmutilated, and of most only the names survived. The relics might still be of high value, and, when compared with the notices and criticisms of ancient writers, might suffice as materials for a full and distinct conception of the artist's peculiar genius, tendencies, and achievements. And so it is with the poet; of whom we may obtain from the existing memorials a sharper and livelier image, than we have of many men whose reputations have been blown abroad by louder trumpets. The portrait thus obtained exhibits a combination of delicacy

and earnestness, together with a marked expressive individuality, which, if it could be adequately conveyed, must needs interest reflective readers, and has at all events much to stir and win the fancy. To convey a knowledge of the man, so far as we can now know him, to those who either want the requisite preparatory information, or have not been led to employ it on the Cean poet, is the task now before us. Almost all the materials have been provided by Dr. Schneidewin, whose text we must be understood to adopt, and to make use of the authorities whom he has employed. There can be no question of the obligation owed to him by every lover of the best literature, for the good sense, learning, and zeal, with which he has devoted himself to his work. Simonides, could he revive, would doubtless repay in his fashion, by an honorary inscription to Dr. Schneidewin, the monument thus raised to his own memory.

The editor of this old poet, obscure and worthless as his labours may seem to the crowd of readers, has, in our conviction, conferred a real benefit upon the world. For he has facilitated our knowledge of the most perfect of human literatures. It has been the destiny of the Greeks, that the more livingly mankind have at any time been impelled to the tasks of systematic reflection and imaginative creation, the more powerfully have they been drawn to the works of that people, to seek the guidance and inspiration of their

labours. For largeness and beauty of design, and accuracy of execution, their compositions remain unsurpassed, and almost unrivalled. It is true, the most advanced portion of our race have derived from the East, and not from Greece, their clearest and deepest knowledge of our relation to that Infinite, out of which we are born, and to which we ever tend. Above the enchanted island of Greek thought, the canopy of varied and glittering clouds has opened, and displayed the Cross hung high amid the stars; while Olympus and its gods are but an earthly eminence of the green and blooming land below. Still the race of Hellas has given us unsurpassed models of the fairest works which we can accomplish on earth, has best taught us how we may come to understand the faculties we are to work with, and the rules to which their operation ought to be subjected. This assertion is only limited, and not overthrown, by the consideration that, when, after many centuries of dark struggle, faith had at last grown into harmony with life,—or, in other words, when, by a process long and painful in proportion to the value of the result, Christian self-denial and Pagan self-assertion had attained an equipoise, strengthening and elevating each other,—then was realized, in being and action, in men and their works, in Raffaelle and Shakspere, in De Sales and Melanchthon, a still higher and sublimer ideal than had been divined by Phidias, Sophocles, and Plato.

It is happily become a common-place to say that among the noblest works to be accomplished by men are those to which the imagination gives its name. They are the creations in which significant realities are harmonized into a beautiful unity. Whatever we can do that is eminent in its kind comes more or less under this description; but it peculiarly and fully applies only to the productions of the fine arts. Thus in statuary the repose of perfect life is to be presented in round and fixed forms, with a simplicity corresponding to the definiteness and solidity of the material. Thus painting displays the moment when different energies are most clearly and strongly combined towards one centre, and produce one complex but satisfying impression of the alliance of colour and form with character and action. In architecture, where human life does not translate itself into tints or masses, it shapes, out of a set of contrivances for practical ends, a symmetrical whole, stamped with a single and permanent aspect of human feeling. So again music attunes the vague flow of passion and emotion, balancing their restless fluctuations into delightful order. But in all these arts the means are those which exist in nature, stone and metal, lines, hues, notes and tones; and the power these possess of suggesting anything of which the eye or ear does not directly take cognisance, is very limited and imperfect: while there is a whole region of thought and

feeling, the inward and invisible land of the human spirit, which they can only hint and dumbly point at. There is but one outward phenomenal object which surveys and indicates all that man is conscious of, namely, articulate speech or language. It has indeed certain weaknesses and incapacities; but it is co-extensive with the whole of our being, though not going so deep as our nature goes,—standing in the subordinate relation of the symbol to the reality. Still it is symbolic of the whole; while the arts which work with natural materials deal with only a part, and that a surface of this whole. The art analogous to these, but using words instead of other instruments and materials, is poetry, the only form of composition which has for its main purpose the presentation of the beautiful by means of language. Other arts which employ words, as rhetoric, logic, historical narrative, have not the beautiful for their aim; and the arts which have this aim, and do not employ language, are in comparison feeble and partial. Poetry takes in a wider range of existence, builds on a deeper foundation, works with a more effectual instrument, and addresses itself more directly to the hearts of all men. Science only analyses that, of which poetry presents the vital image, and of which it gives, by its predominant sentiment and adequate catastrophe, the highest, that is, a practical solution. Rhetoric aims at influencing the conduct or

the opinions of men by other means than a simple exposition of truth, or a presentation of images which embody it, and is limited by the peculiarities of the moment, and of the men whom it addresses; while History is bound by the hard and literal facts which it relates, from which if it departs to aim at the ideal, it mistakes its own work, and is poetry,—probably maimed and defaced,—under the name of history. Thus Poetry is the highest and most harmonious utterance of man's heart; and verse, its characteristic form, indicates that it aims at being so even in the modulation of its sounds.

In this greatest art the Greeks have been, on the whole, the foremost masters of the world. Of the earliest period in their history the only full and connected records are two poems. These, the Iliad and Odyssey, are the first monuments upon the banks of the stream of European existence; and they have given rise to all the others which we meet with in tracing downwards that main flood. They awakened and harmonized the minds of all Greece, and inspired those who have inspired mankind. They also exhibit the ages during which they were composed, which are shown under the name and honours of a still earlier and legendary time, amplified and more brightly tinted, but still manifestly to be recognised. The tribes and cities were under the rule of hereditary kings, the chiefs of warlike bands

of nobles, while the crowd of the people were comparatively poor, unarmed, and helpless. In the halls of these leaders, which were stored with wine and food, with embroidered garments, ornaments, furniture of metals, and finely-wrought arms, and which resounded with the feasts of their lords, the divine minstrel chanted to his harp the ballad which recorded the deeds of those who heard him, and of their glorious ancestors. The old tale of war, with all its circumstances of local and family names, was rounded and brightened into graceful and distinct completeness. A world of wonder lay on every side about the near foreground, and filled the past with its miracles; and over all spread the region of the gods, who in festivity, in wrath, or love, had often mingled with mortals. But an inscrutable death-land stretched below, the scene of unknown sadness and pain, where life faded into a pale and languid dream; and an impenetrable law of destiny, brightened now and then with an evident gleam of retribution, encircled the dominions both of men and gods. Of these songs the special and broad aspect was that of an unbroken painting of the outward; the clearness and beauty of which animated the singer into creative joy, without awakening the reflective self-consciousness which would have marred the simplicity and directness of his uninterrupted tale. He regarded the spectacle of life, as tradition presented it to him,

clothed, as by tradition it must be, in the colours of the present, with eager, wondering interest, which he imparted to his hearers: but he did not say to them,—what he had never said to himself, —*We too are men like those of whom we sing; and it is ourselves that we see lifted and lighted up in them; and therefore it is that our hearts beat in so lively accord with theirs.* Thus their poetry had a charm of childish delight and admiration, not indeed of all the most valuable, but by far the hardest to reproduce in after-ages of criticism and science,—ages when even generosity and self-denial can scarcely outlive the impulse of the moment, without beginning to consider how generous and self-denying they are. It would be idle to regret that those old days of genial and shrewd instinct could not last; but it is well in our changed, sharpened, and more speculative times, to look upon the rude and onward strength which once existed, and which softened itself to melody in the songs of Homer.

We could not see those days and poems with our present sense of a keen and strange awakening into a far distant mode of being, had it not so long and so completely passed away. The busy life of Greece, around and below the hereditary heroic monarchies, was constantly rising and gaining strength; and when accident or revolution left a void, or disclosed a weakness in the royalty of any state, the new and ready forces working all about

it thrust themselves into the gap, excluded the old names, and made the dominion their own. Before the period of any much later literature now extant, the royalties had almost all vanished even in name; and increasing wealth, numbers, and energy had won political authority for some smaller or larger portion of the citizens of each state, for an aristocracy, or for what the Greeks called a democracy, or for a ruler, the Tyrannus of antiquity, whom circumstances and character, not birthright, invested with power. This period may be called that of the tyrannies, as the Homeric ages were those of legitimate monarchy. But these later intrusive governors naturally arose from the wants and energies of their time, when the traditions and feelings of the old heroic sovereignties were still fresh. The idea of law for itself, and not impersonated in a man, had not yet reached its mature and independent strength; and the boldest, the ablest, he, in short, who was deemed, if he was not, the worthiest, easily and often quietly created an authority which the people felt to be needful. Such a ruler more closely resembled Cosmo de' Medici, than the vulgar ruffians from whom we have derived our conception of a tyrant. His power was no doubt partly maintained by fear, but was generally to a great degree founded on affection, gratitude, and admiration; and was for the most part closely connected with that free movement and active life of

the city, that festal splendour and social ease, in the midst of which it sprang up, and from which it derived much of its vigour as well as gracefulness. Advancing arts, deepening reflection, growing population, increasing wealth and expense, and more numerous and closer relations of traffic and pleasure between multitudes of men, all marked the period of the tyrannies, which immediately preceded the liveliest and most creative age of art and philosophy that the world has ever known. Science began in Ionia and Italy, while the contests of the games were objects of yearly growing interest, and were sung by the sweetest and gravest poets of the Hellenic race.

We thus find the rise of deliberate, self-conscious reflection, and a more matured and variously cultivated sense of symmetry, in close union. Men were not only pushing out and tempering new powers, but felt and told themselves that they were doing so, and thought and spake of what and why these efforts were, and of themselves as the authors of them. In the more open and popular life now enjoyed, each exulted in his more distinct personality. In the public assembly, at the religious pomp, or the spectacle of the heroic games, every one both read the sympathy of those around him in their eyes, and felt and exclaimed inwardly that he too rejoiced with them, and was, like each of them, a man, a Greek, a citizen of some god-protected state. Behind all this lay the bright

back-ground of religious and epic tradition, with its gods, its kings, its tales of war and love and woe, animating every rock and vale and stream and mural city with its own memorable legend. Hence, with such a language, such a people, as the Greek, there could not but be poetry; and of this the peculiar characteristic, distinguishing it from the old spontaneous gush and unbroken flow of narrative song, was the reflection and self-consciousness of the individual poet, finding and strengthening a kindred power in all around him. This is lyrical poetry: it has its own measures, its own music, laws, and a purpose of its own. But the indispensable and universal quality, rather the inmost spirit of its life, is the impulse to present the poet as appropriating and living in the images he shapes, and to lead his hearers to the same state; instead of directly presenting those images as nature, giving them unmodified by the personality of the poet, and fitted to his hearers only by a roundness, entireness, and fluency, which no separate part of the great web of reality, when cut off from the whole, can in itself possess. A picture of the world painted in words, with men as the clearest and foremost portion of it, but as to whom the artist has never asked himself what he thinks and feels, or stirred his hearers to ask themselves, all being contented to enjoy a sympathy in which they forget their own existence; this is essentially epic poetry. A vocal

picture, in which everything has for its deepest basis its relation to the man conceiving it, and to the men whom he calls around; this is lyric poetry. But one other great form of poetry is possible, that which combines much of the charm and force of both the others, in which self-consciousness projects itself into external figures, and appears as unself-consciousness, presenting them at the same time more directly even than epic song. This is the drama.

Of the lyric poetry of Greece little is left to us; and the only considerable body of poems of this kind by one writer, the Odes of Pindar, belong to that period when poetry had already ripened into the drama; for Pindar was younger than Æschylus. But somewhat earlier than these gigantic minstrels, fit singers of destiny and the gods, and of the ancient half-divine heroes, was a man of whom sufficient relics still exist to supply a clear knowledge of his style, and of whose life we know enough to form a distinct image both of his outward circumstances and his inward frame and culture. This man is Simonides, whose fame filled antiquity as rich wine a golden urn; and who for this alone would be ever noticeable, that he is the earliest human being of European race, not politically eminent, of whose character in its finer traits and subleties we can obtain a well-grounded and many-sided resemblance.

The Island Ceos* is the nearest of the Cyclades to Attica, and lies over-against Cape Sunium, from which its lofty mountain summit is distinctly visible†. The island is broken in surface, but extremely productive of good wine, various fruits, and excellent honey. It also abounds in pure water; and it has an admirable harbour. It seems to have been early occupied by a Dorian race, who were subsequently overpowered, but not expelled, by Ionian colonists. The population thus included the two main types of Greek character, blended into one peculiarly its own. Aristæus, the mild and prosperous god, the inventor of agriculture and of the treatment of bees, the companion of Bacchus, the son of Apollo, and at Ceos in some measure identified with his father, was the more especial deity of the island. Artemis was also worshipped as inseparable from her brother. In the city Ioulis, the birth-place of Simonides, there was a temple to Aphrodite-Ctesylle, connected with the mournful legend of Ctesylle and her lover Hermochares, which the poet must have been accustomed to hear from his earliest infancy. The tale went, that the Athenian Hermochares had seen the maiden dancing in a festival at the altar of Apollo

* See the first part of Bröndsted's very valuable *Reisen und Untersuchungen in Griechenland.* Paris, 1826.

† Mount Elias, the loftiest in the island, rises 570 French metres (near 2000 English feet) above the sea.

in Carthæa, the other principal town of the island, and had informed her of his love by writing on an apple, which he cast towards her in the temple of Artemis. The father of the maiden swore by the laurel of Apollo to give him his daughter, but afterwards broke his oath, and bestowed her on another. She eloped by night with Hermochares, sailed to Athens, and was wedded. But the god decreed to punish her father for his perjury; and she died in giving birth to her child. A dove was seen to rise from her funeral pile, while the body had disappeared; and the god commanded Hermochares to build a temple at Ioulis to Aphrodite-Ctesylle. There is a point in the interior of the island, from which the prospect takes in the sea, the neighbouring islands, the coast of Attica, as far as Cape Sunium, and in the foreground the site of Ioulis, where now stands the town of Zea. A little below this point has recently been discovered a colossal lion*, hewn in the live rock, and doubtless connected with an ancient legend†, which records that the nymphs at first inhabited the watered island, till, being scared by a lion, they fled to Carystus in Eubœa. And hence, (says the old author), is a cape at Ceos called the Lion. It is also to Ceos, that tradition referred the story of the beautiful

* Bröndsted, p. 30, 31, 32.

† Preserved by Heraclides Ponticus, and cited by Bröndsted.

youth, Cyparissus*, whose dearest playfellow and friend was a noble stag, sacred to the nymphs and dear to all the islanders. The boy by chance wounded him mortally with an arrow, and in his overpowering grief prayed the gods that he might be for ever a mourner. This prayer was heard; and he was changed into a cypress. This tree, with its unchanging and melancholy foliage, was doubtless frequent and striking in the busy landscape and under the bright sky of Ceos.

The people, among whom religion and imagination had so much power, were generally of grave and severe habits. The youths and maidens drank only water until after marriage. Licentiousness of pleasure was strictly forbidden. The men put on no marks of mourning for their children. But the most remarkable of their customs, at least in later times than those of Simonides, and very possibly in his also, was, that the old of both sexes, when sensible of decaying strength, would meet, as at a feast, and pledge each other in cups of poison. Yet these islanders were engaged in busy commerce, and partook abundantly of cultivated enjoyment. And their land was independent, and probably in its highest prosperity, during the first half of the life of Simonides, before the insular dominion of Athens.

Simonides was born in the middle of the sixth

* Ovid, Metam. x. 106.

century before our era (B.C. 556) and lived till near the middle of the following one (B.C. 467) He was later than the great lyrical poets Ibycus, Alcæus, Stesichorus, and Sappho. But his fame, if not more lasting or more widely spread among his countrymen, yet rose higher, and included the praise of more various talents. In his long life he was contemporary with several of the chief names and most memorable events of human history. Xenophanes, the chief of the Eleatic school of speculation,—the deeply religious and reflective Heraclitus, the greatest of the Ionic philosophers,—and Pythagoras, the systematic moralist and politician, all lived during his active and brilliant years. Pisistratus, whose name is no less inseparable from the history of the Homeric poems than from that of Athens, ruled there during his youth; where Thepsis began to exhibit his lyrical impersonations, when the singer of the neighbouring island had barely reached man's estate, and was probably casting his eyes with longing admiration on the shores of the wider world around him. The ships which frequented the harbour of his native island, and the strangers whom he met on his travels, must have told him of the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, and some years afterwards of the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses, and the extinction of that peculiar nationality, in which Herodotus, who beheld only its wreck, found so much to

puzzle him by its strangeness, and to delight him by its mysterious analogies and contrasts to Greek beliefs and customs. Later in his life he beheld the conflict between his countrymen and the empire of Cyrus, and recorded in verse the glories of Marathon, Thermopylæ, and Platæa. He saw the greatness and heard the melodious sound of Æschylus and Pindar. And the first rumour of the character and genius of Pericles may have reached his dying ears. These names, which even as such are to us stirring and delightful, lived as men, with living deeds and voices, around the living Simonides; and we cannot doubt that in serene joy he felt himself one of them.

The earliest vestige which remains of the life of the poet, consists in a citation by Athenæus of four obscure lines attributed to him, which may be thus translated:

1.—ccxxx*.

The wild kid's father, and the dreadful fish,
Their heads together drooping, let descend
Upon their eyes the son of night, nor wish
Great Bacchus' slaughtering minister to tend.

Of these verses three explanations are suggested in Athenæus. The one which appears most probable, is that at the feast of Bacchus in Ioulis, the native place of Simonides, an ox was to

* The Roman numerals refer throughout this paper to the edition by Schneidewin, the Arabic to our own series of translations.

be sacrificed. The axe used for the purpose had been sent to a smith, who had not returned it in time, and Simonides, then a lad, was despatched for it. But he found that the smith had neglected his task, and was asleep in the midst of his idle implements. On his return he intimated the state of the case in these riddling lines. The *wild kid's father* seems to indicate something made of goat-skin, perhaps the smith's leather apron, but more probably the bellows. The *dreadful fish* means a *crab*, which was a name among the Greeks for a *pair of tongs*. The *son of night* is *sleep*. The quietly comic turn of mind which the poet displayed in after-life, and which lay deep in his character, comes out even in this early slight anecdote.

It is unknown to what time of his life we should refer a somewhat similar trait, resting on the same authority; but as it is the only other mention of him in connexion with his native island, and is suitable to his early manhood as well as to any after-time, it may be noticed here. It is said that Simonides was employed in instructing a choir, or a band of singers, in honour of Apollo, at the Temple of the God in Carthæa. The remains of this building still exist*, and have been explored recently. It stood upon a height; and water was daily brought by an ass to the poet

* See Bröndsted.

and his scholars from a fountain below. The verses are, in English,

2.—CCXXXI.

Who will not gain the sweet Cicada's meed,
Epeius, son of Panopeus, must feed.

The interpretation is this. The poet meant to decree that whoever of the singers should not be present at the appointed hour, should be fined in a measure of barley for the ass. The *song of the Cicada* being typical of poetry, its *meed* was the lyric prize; and *Epeius*, being, according to the tradition, one of the Grecian heroes at Troy, was employed to carry water for the others: hence his name was jestingly used to designate the unheroic quadruped, which probably sounded a little less far-fetched to a Greek, from the well-known Homeric comparison of Ajax to the same animal. The little tale, trifling as it is, brings before us a graceful miniature picture of the poet, surrounded by his troop, devoted to the worship of the god of song, the patron of the prosperity of their country, and, while honouring him by noble and earnest hymns, indulging at intervals in light social merriment.

Some verses of Phædrus (iv. 21) relate a story of Simonides, which seems to belong to the first years of his absence from Ceos, rather than to any later period. For his poverty is spoken of as the cause of his journeys in Asia Minor,

where he is said to have written panegyrical poems for money, as Pindar did afterwards; and there is no reason to imagine that he was ever in want after his visit to Athens, under the patronage of the sons of Pisistratus. Phædrus is not a very sufficient authority; but the story is improbable only in the eyes of those who attach a graver importance than we do to the charge of avarice, often advanced against Simonides, with which the anecdote appears inconsistent. If the report of his love of wealth is partly founded on mistake and exaggeration (which, as a general rule, is true of the alleged faults of all eminent men), and if, though a real tendency of his mind, it was always under the control of his clear sense, the tale has nothing unlikely in it. It is said that on his return from Asia towards Ceos the vessel made shipwreck; and while the other passengers were engaged in securing their valuables, Simonides took no thought about the property he had acquired on his travels, and answered some one, who asked him the reason of this, *I carry all my possessions with me.* And so it proved; for those who escaped were plundered of all they had, while the fame of Simonides, and his poetic talents, exerted very likely, as we know they sometimes were, in extempore verse, secured him a friendly and even splendid reception at the neighbouring town of Clazomenæ, where rich presents were bestowed on him.

The direct authority of Hipparchus, the son of Pisistratus, at Athens, began in the year B.C. 528, and lasted till 514. During some portion of these years we know that Simonides, now in the prime and fulness of his life, was favoured and enriched by him and lived at Athens in his intimate society. It was at this period that a jealousy arose between the Cean master, and Lasos of Hermione, the Dithyrambic poet, who was also at Athens, honoured and celebrated. Anacreon also lived under the same protection; and an inscription for the tomb of the amatory songster, or rather a little poem in that form, is extant (CLXXI.), by no means wanting in beauty of expression. The youthful flood of passionate intoxication, which poured through the poems* and filled the heart of the Teian, can have met with little sympathy from Simonides, who has not left a single line inspired by love, and whose impulses were probably too quiet, and his intellect too predominant, to let him either create or prize the poetic expression of sensual longings and raptures. It is not known whether he remained at Athens after the death of Hipparchus in 514. The wife of Hippoclus, the tyrant of Lampsacus, was buried in a tomb which had this inscription, the work of Simonides:

* The larger part of those commonly attributed to Anacreon, and translated as his, are probably of a much later time.

3.—CLXX.

Of Greeks was Hippias first, while shone his day;
Below Archedice his daughter lies.
Sire, husband, brethren, sons had kingly sway;
But ne'er did pride within her bosom rise.

It has been said that he showed his ingratitude for the favours he had received from the family of Pisistratus, by composing a laudatory inscription, probably designed for the brazen statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the work of the sculptor Antenor, which were publicly set up at Athens, and were carried away by Xerxes. The awkward cleft in one of the names could not have been avoided in Greek lines of the metre usual for inscriptions, but renders it uncertain whether Simonides wrote the distich; for there is nothing at all like this ugly fracture in his other writings, and but a single instance that we know of besides in Greek literature. Our English version, on the Chinese plan of copying, reproduces the anomaly.

4.—CLXXXVII.

Day dawned on Athens, when Aristogeit—
— on and Harmodius dared Hipparchus smite.

This accusation against the poet, like so many others arising from the application of coarse popular maxims which save the trouble of reflection, has little reason in it, even if the lines were his. It was not as a member of a political party, but as a foreign poet, that he had bright-

ened the society of Hipparchus with pleasantry and wisdom, and had accepted his bounty. Probably, when the question arose between the popular government and that of one man at Athens, he may have sincerely approved of the revolution, which introduced the kind of *autonomy* prevailing in his own island. It was certainly more consistent with his own tastes as well as fortunes to live under the patronage of a refined and humane ruler, than in the tumult of a democracy. But there is no ground to suppose that he did not believe it a form of political society the best adapted to some parts of Greece.

After the death of Hipparchus, and before the Persian war, the poet is found in Thessaly, where he enjoyed the protection and favour of the great families, the Aleuadæ and Scopadæ. His poetry however was probably not so well appreciated by most of those around him as in Southern Greece: for it is said that he was asked, why he could not enchant the Thessalians as well as other men? and that he answered, *Because the Thessalians are too uncultivated for me to enchant them.* There are several snatches and fragments of song relating to his residence in this country. It is said that he was drinking at table with others, and that the attendants who handed round snow to be mixed in the cups, overlooked him; whereupon he produced at the moment these verses:

5.—CCXXVII.

This snow around the Olympian steep was cast
By Boreas blowing keen his Thracian blast,
And chilled the cloakless breast; but soon, yet frore,
Beneath Pieria's soil was covered o'er.
Of it give me my share; for none methinks
At a friend's banquet a warm goblet drinks.

It was probably during the heat of summer that these lines were imagined and spoken, when the picture must have been in pretty and poignant contrast with the feelings and the season. The following inscription for a hound dates evidently from his residence in the same country:

6.—CLXXXV.

Hound Lycas, even now thy white bones cold
Within this tomb must needs the stags arouse:
Thy worth great Pelion knew, and Ossa's wold,
And all Cithæron's solitary brows.

The next lines are part of an ode in honour of Scopas, the son of Creon:

7.—XII.

A man can hardly good in truth become,
With hands, feet, mind, all square, without a flaw.
* * * *
Nor suits my thought the word of Pittacus,
Though he was sage, that to be virtuous
Is hard. This fits a god alone.
A man must needs to evil fall,
When by hopeless chance o'erthrown.
Whoso does well, him good we call,
And bad if bad his lot be known;
Those by the gods beloved are best of all.

Enough for me in sooth
  Is one not wholly wrong,
Nor all perverse, but skilled in useful truth,
  A healthy soul and strong.
He has no blame from me,
  Who love not blame;
For countless those who foolish be,
  And fair are all things free from shame.
That therefore which can ne'er be found,
  I seek not, nor desire with empty thought,
A man all blameless, on this wide-spread ground,
  'Mid all who cull its fruitage vainly sought.
If found, ye too this prize of mine
  Shall know: meanwhile all those I love
And praise, who do no wrong by will malign;
For to necessity must yield the Gods above.

We have also the fragment of a lament for the destruction of the family of the Scopadæ:

8.—XLVI.

Thou ne'er forsee'st, O man, the coming day,
  Nor know'st how long the rich his wealth shall own.
For not so swiftly skims the fly away,
  As all our bliss is flown.

The poet is said to have been closely interested in the catastrophe to which this poem refers. The story is spoken of by Callimachus and Ovid, and is recounted by Phædrus, and after him by Lafontaine and Fenelon. It is also found in several ancient prose-writers. Simonides, it relates, was feasted by Scopas at Cranon in Thessaly, with a crowd of kinsmen and guests, before whom he recited the ode he had composed in honour of his host's victory in the chariot-race. He had inter-

woven with the praises of the victor those of Castor and Pollux, the patrons of horsemanship. Scopas was dissatisfied at this, and said that he should only give the poet half the present intended for him, leaving him to look for the remainder to the gods, to whom so large a portion of the song had been devoted. Simonides doubtless maintained his usual composure, probably not without a smile; but in a few moments he was informed that two young men on horseback were asking for him at the door. He obeyed the call, but on reaching the open air looked in vain for his visitors. In the mean time he was startled by a crash behind him; the building had fallen in, and overwhelmed the whole company. Simonides alone escaped alive. The tradition further reported, that, after the destruction of his companions, Simonides identified the mangled and disfigured bodies, from recollecting the place at the tables occupied by each guest. In this fact some of the ancients saw the evidence of an art of technical memory said to have been invented by the poet. It is more natural and satisfactory to refer it to his habitual accuracy of observation, and spontaneous power of remembrance, of which he himself speaks in the following couplet:

9.—CCIV.

Simonides, son of Leoprepes,
No peer in memory at eighty sees.

It is interesting to connect with this sharpness of

the mental eye that lively verbal presentation of objects, which Longinus insisted on as remarkably distinguishing him. It might be deemed that the sordid folly here attributed to Scopas is disproved by the poet's having lamented his fate in song. This however is not so unlikely as it has been thought, if we consider that he was pre-eminently qualified and inclined to make allowances for others, and to escape the errors of those who judge mankind by too high or too peculiar a standard.

Before the first Persian invasion, we find Simonides again in connexion with Athens; for we have an inscription from his hand, probably in honour of those Athenians who fell in battle against the Chalcidians of Eubœa, when these joined the Bœotians in support of the invasion of Attica by the Spartans under Cleomenes. The lines are these:

10.—CXLVIII.

At Dirphys' foot we fell; and o'er us here
Beside Euripus' shore this mound was piled;
Not undeserved; for youth to us was dear;
And that we lost in battle's tempest wild.

The Athenian army had earlier in the same day gained a victory over the Bœotians. The prisoners taken from both parties of the enemy were kept in chains until redeemed by a heavy ransom. Of this money a portion was employed on a four-horse chariot, doubtless of metal, dedicated to

Minerva. This occasioned the following inscription:

11.—CLXXXVIII.

The sons of Athens, who in warlike toil
Bœotia's host and Chalcis' overthrew,
And chained the captives, here the tenth of spoil
Set up as horses unto Pallas due.

After the defeat of the first Persian Invasion (490 B.C.) he produced these lines in record of the Athenian victory:

12.—CXLIX.

At Marathon for Greece the Athenians fought;
And low the gilded Medians' power they brought.

Another couplet expresses its own purport:

13.—CLXXXIX.

Me, goat-foot Pan, the Arcadian, foe to Medes,
To Athens friend, Miltiades set up.

In the year after the battle he is said to have gained the prize from Æschylus in a public contest, by an elegy on those who fell at Marathon. Much might be said on the probable distinction between the compositions of the two great poets. The exquisite pathos, the clear and quiet depth of Simonides, must have presented a beautiful contrast to the no less admirable vehemence and impassioned force of the dramatic giant. Such is the difference which all the fine arts exemplify, at many periods of their history, between the strength which serenely rests and delightedly

balances itself within the bounds of harmony, and that which, without in truth exceeding them, seems ever on the point of springing and breaking over.

After this time we lose sight of the poet for near ten years, until the invasion of Greece under Xerxes again brings him before us. When victories by land and sea, and the genius of Themistocles had ended for ages the attempts of Asia upon Europe, we find the Cean celebrating the chief events and men of the war in a series of poems. The following lines are the fragment of an encomium on those who fell at Thermopylæ:

14.—IX.

Of those who at Thermopylæ were slain,
Glorious the doom, and beautiful the lot:
Their tomb an altar; men from tears refrain
To honour them, and praise, but mourn them not.
Such sepulchre nor drear decay,
Nor all-destroying time shall waste; this right have they.
Within their grave the homebred glory
Of Greece was laid; this witness gives
Leonidas the Spartan, in whose story
A wreath of famous virtue ever lives.

15.—CL.

On those who fell at Thermopylæ.

Against three hundred myriads gathered here,
From Pelops' land four thousand felt no fear.

16.—CLI.

On the Lacedæmonians who fell with Leonidas.

To those of Lacedæmon, stranger, tell,
That as their laws commanded here we fell.

17.—CLII.

Of famed Megistias here behold the tomb.
Him on this side Spercheus slew the Medes;
A seer who well foresaw his coming doom,
But would not lose his share in Sparta's deeds.

18.—CLIII.

On those who fell with Leonidas.

If well to die be valour's noblest part,
In this with us no mortal men may vie:
Freedom for Greece we sought with fearless heart,
And here in undecaying fame we lie.

19.—CLIV.

On the same.

These won for Sparta fame through endless days,
When death's dark cloud upon themselves they drew,
But dying died not; for their valour's praise
From Hades' dwelling leads them up anew.

20.—CLV.

On the same.

This, O Leonidas! the glorious grave
Of those who fell with thee, wide Sparta's king.
'Gainst countless shafts and rushing horses brave
Of Media's host they stood unwavering.

21.—CLVI.*

Perhaps a Fragment of a Poem on the same.

Time every action will most truly scan,
And show the mind that is within the man.

22.—CLVI.

These, fain for Greece against the Medes to die,
In Opoeis, chief of Locrian cities, lie.

---

* It has been doubted whether this and the three preceding are really by Simonides.

23.—CLVII.

For the Corinthians fallen at Salamis, and buried there.

Stranger, in Corinth we were known of yore;
Here in the isle of Ajax now are we:
With ease Phœnicia's prows we overbore,
And Mede and Persian, setting Hellas free.

24.—CLVIII.

For the Monument in honour of the same erected at the Isthmus.

When Hellas trembled all on danger's brink,
To give our lives for her we did not shrink.

25.—CLIX.

On the Athenians fallen at Salamis.

The sons of Athens here laid Persia low,
And saved their native land from slavery's woe.

26.—CLX.

On Adimantus, who commanded at Salamis.

Here Adimantus lies, by whom led on
To fight, all Hellas freedom's garland won.

27.—CLXI.

Fragment of an Inscription for those who fell near Byzantium.

* * * *

And all who near Byzantium's fishy sea
Undaunted fell to set their country free.

28.—CLXVII.

Inscription for the Men of Megara, who fell at Platœa.

That Greece and Megara might still be free
Our death we welcomed; some beside the sea
Beneath Eubœa, where is known the shrine
Of pure, bow-bearing Artemis divine;
Some at Mount Mycale; and some whose blows
Destroyed at Salamis Phœnicia's prows;

And some who dared on that Bœotian plain
Attack the horseman-myriads not in vain.
And in the city's crowded central place
Thus our Nisæans chose our deeds to grace.

29.—CLXIX.

Inscription for a Lion on the Grave of Leonidas.

Of beasts the bravest I, of mortals he,
Upon this mound of stone now watched by me.

30.—CXC.

On Consecrated Arms.

The conquering crew of Diodorus gave
These arms to Leto, spoils of Medians brave.

31.—CXCI.

On a Trophy at Delphi.

In sign and witness of victorious deeds
The Delphians raised me, honouring highest Jove,
When they with Phœbus' aid the assaulting Medes
Had chased, and saved the brass-crowned fane and grove.

32.—CXCII.

On a Trophy in honour of Artemis.

The sons of Athens here at sea subdued
In fight all Asia's many-voiced brood;
And when the Medes had fallen, they built up this
Their trophy due to maiden Artemis.

33.—CXCIII.

On Democritus.

Democritus was third of all, when met
The Greek and Mede at Salamis in fray:
Five ships he took, and free one Dorian set,
Which first barbarian hands had made their prey.

34.—CXCIV.

On a Consecrated Picture of Corinthian Women.

For Greece, and most to aid their townsmen bold,
These women much the Cyprian power besought:
Great Aphrodite loved this noblest hold
Of Greece; for it against the Medians fought.

35.—CXCV.

On a Golden Tripod at Delphi.

This gift for wide-spread Greece was made by those
Who rescued all its towns from slavery's woes.

36.—CXCVIII.

On a Tripod at Delphi.

Pausanias, chief of Greece, who slew the Medes,
To Phœbus gave this fruit of warlike deeds.

37.—CXCVIII.

On a Bronze Vase.

This sign of valour Euxine's shore to grace
Pausanias gave to him who rules the seas,
The chief o'er Greece of Lacedæmon's race,
Sprung through Cleombrotus from Hercules.

38.—CXCIX.

On an Altar to Jupiter.

The Greeks, in pride of their victorious arms,
Which conquered following on where valour drove,
For Greece delivered all from Persia's swarms,
This altar built to thank delivering Jove.

39.—CC.

On Arms in the Temple of Athene.

These bows and arrows now from strife at rest
Are hung on high within Athene's fane;
Which oft in fight by gore from many a breast
Of horsemen Medes were washed with crimson stain.

40.—LIX.

On the Battle of Platæa. A Fragment.

The midmost those of watered Ephyre,
Well skilled in all the discipline of war;
And Glaucus' sons from Corinth on the sea
Made witness to their toils the golden star
That lights the noontide air: and thus shall he
Their and their father's glory spread afar;
For he sees all things best, the noontide's golden star.

Here are brought together all the memorial verses extant on the conflict between Greece and Asia, which are either known to have been composed by Simonides, or can probably be attributed to him. The English reader will be struck by boldnesses and harshnesses of expression, for which the original poet is not responsible, and which will appear excusable only to those who know by trial the difficulty of rendering in English verse compositions of so limited a form and so compact a structure, and containing many Greek names, having no natural affinity to our rhymes, and admitting of no equivalents. The character which distinguishes these inscriptions, is a perfect appropriateness, at once weighty and elegant, to their well-known subjects and to their monumental purpose; a merit for which an inferior poet might have been led to substitute either the pictorial narrative of epic song, or the excited feeling of lyric. This sense of the fitting and adequate, when embracing a large domain of thought, combined with creative genius, is the

sufficient and only source of the highest works of art. Themistocles seems no less apt for the opportunity he was placed in, than Simonides for the task of commemorating his achievements.

With this Athenian he stood in close personal relation. We have indeed only a single couplet directly devoted to him, in which the poet says:

41.—CXCVII.

A Thracian woman named Abrotonon
Bestowed on Greece Themistocles her son.

But there are anecdotes showing that they were in habits of social intercourse. It is even said that Simonides on some occasion asked too great a favour of him, while he was commander, and that he replied, his friend would be a bad poet in singing against tune, and he a bad ruler in acting against law. The tale sounds very like the sonorous phrase of some later writer; for it was not respect for the laws, or for the idea of duty in any form, that distinguished Themistocles. It may however have been an excuse to avoid doing something inconvenient, but perhaps in itself innocent, to which there happened to be a plausible technical objection. Themistocles is also reported to have indulged in some pleasantry on occasion of the poet's consent to have his portrait taken, his features not being favourable for that purpose. The Athenian may the more have been tempted to this from the consciousness of

that noble aspect which many centuries afterwards was observed in the statue he had erected of himself. The great statesman was not very likely to have reflected that there is no man, however obscure, much less such a poet as Simonides, of whose countenance an accurate picture, accompanied with other adequate records of his character and story, would not be a precious document. The most remarkable trait of their conversation is the answer of Themistocles to the Cean's offer of teaching him how to cultivate the art of remembering: *I should prefer that of forgetting.* This is probably the only memorial which for a moment shows us the deep self-consciousness of a man so famous by his worldly faculties and deeds.

The poet is also recorded to have lived in familiarity with the other Greek whose name is most connected with the history of the Persian overthrow, the Spartan Pausanias. In the height and giddiness of his fame and power, Pausanias at a banquet asked his guest for some lively saying to give zest to the conviviality, when the poet replied, *Remember that thou art a man.* Afterwards, when in utter ruin, and dying of famine, Pausanias exclaimed, *O! Cean friend, great was thy word to me; and I in my folly held it for nought.*

The fate of these two men, the most eminent in their day, of Athens and of Sparta, both fallen

before their deaths into calamity, and leaguing themselves with the Persians, whom they had gained immortal renown by defeating,—the one dying in exile, and the other as an infamous criminal,—has left no trace in the existing writings of Simonides, who had known them both. Their stories however were well fitted to strengthen that vein of mournful reflection on the weakness and instability of man, which is apparent in some fragments of his poems, and was evidently essential to his character. Nor can it be doubted that he must often have heaved a thoughtful sigh over the confused mischances of will and circumstance, which had overthrown the two chief conquerors at Platæa and Salamis, and had brought on them, not only misery, but that saddest kind of defeat, stigmatized by the conscience of mankind with the name of guilt.

Simonides was now nearly eighty years old, and must have looked forward to that close which alike ends the tale of the most quietly successful and the most fatally disturbed life, and transfers to other worlds of action both the poet and the hero. But it did not consist with his clear and shaping spirit to waste himself in lamenting either for the unalterable past which had devoured others, or for his own inevitable future. Accordingly we find him engaged at Athens in recording the choral successes of his friends as well as his own. The following lines appear designed to comme-

morate the victory of a tribe which had often before failed:

42.—CCV.

On a Votive Tripod.

Oft swelled with vivid shout the Bacchanal Hours,
While strove the Acamantian tribe in song;
Oft crowned with sacred caps and votive flowers
The anointed heads of that melodious throng.
This Tripod, sign of their victorious day,
They won, instructed by Antigenes,
Argive Ariston guiding well the lay,
With Dorian pipings sweet the soul to please.
But Hipponicus, Struthon's son, defrayed
The cost, and in the Graces' car was set:
They 'mid mankind his name illustrious made,
Dear to each Muse that wears the violet.

43.—CCII.

On a Votive Tablet.

That bulls and tripods fifty-six were gained,
Simonides, by thee, this tablet shows.
Thy voice has oft sweet choirs of singers trained;
So now in Victory's car thou may'st repose.

44.—CCIII.

On a Choral Victory.

In Athens Adimantus ruled, when won
The tribe Antiochis their tripod fair;
And Aristides, of Xenophilus son,
Set forth a choir of fifty voices rare;
Whom taught at eighty years Simonides,
The famous offspring of Leoprepes.

It must have been after Simonides was eighty (B.C. 476), that he left Athens to visit Hiero of Syracuse. There is a faint probability that an

anecdote often recorded of him ought to be referred to this voyage. Having landed with his shipmates near Tarentum, he found the corpse of a murdered man, and buried it on the shore. The following night an apparition of the man stood before him, and warned him not to sail the next day. His companions disregarded the counsel; and a storm sank them in the waters. There is an inscription, which probably was designed for the spectral prophet:

45.—CLXXXIII.

The man who saved, though dead, by faithful aid
Simonides of Ceos, here is laid.

We have also another couplet which may have been designed for the tomb, or may be part of an elegy:

46.—CLXXIV.

Do thou, protecting Jove! my murderers slay,
And those who dug my grave with life repay.

This wish of the murdered man has been represented as likely to proceed from Simonides, inasmuch as Plato introduces him in the Republic, maintaining the doctrine, which indeed was that usual among the ancients, that it is just to benefit our friends and injure our enemies. The more interesting point however is the friendly vision, in which it is easy for us now to read the evidence of a nature more finely sensitive than common to all human impressions, and to the physical tendencies of things, and thus beholding with

the clearness and immediateness of intuition, much which is concealed from ordinary eyes, and which theory could never attain to.

It is well known that the great victory gained at Himera by the Sicilians under Gelo against the Carthaginians was said to have been won on the same day on which the battle of Salamis was fought (B.C. 480). On this occasion Gelo and his brothers dedicated a tripod at Delphi, on which the inscription was composed by Simonides, and is as follows:

47.—CXCVI.

Dinomenes' four sons this tripod gave,
Gelo and Hiero, Polyzelus third,
Last Thrasybulus, having helped to save
Greece, and subdued the great barbarian herd.

About three years after the battle, Hiero succeeded his brother as ruler of Syracuse, and of a large portion of Sicily. The power of this family may be imagined from the fact, that, before it had been strengthened by the victory at Himera, Gelo offered on certain conditions to aid the Greeks against Xerxes with thirty ships of war and an army of thirty thousand men, and to supply provisions during the war for the whole army of the Greeks. Hiero was probably the richest and most powerful man of the Hellenic race before Philip of Macedon. But still more was he distinguished by his love for the most beautiful kinds of cultivation, and by the favour

he showed to the most illustrious men of his age. He drew to his court at the same time Simonides, Æschylus, and Pindar. With these were associated Bacchylides the Cean, a lyric poet younger than Simonides, and related to him, and Epicharmus, the writer of comedies, whose thoughtful knowledge of human nature is celebrated in antiquity. These names are sufficient vouchers for the tastes of Hiero, and for the kind of conversation he delighted in. The world has assuredly never seen, unless at Weimar, so remarkable a union of men of the highest genius at the court of a prince. Æschylus we know to have been memorable for his power of rounding into a whole, producing a deep sense of beauty, the highest images of strength and pain then conceivable by man; and to have been himself a hero worthy to paint the heroism of an earlier and huger lineage. In Pindar the only element is beauty, the whole life harmony, and the composition is a whole of which every part is a distinct type, so that, more than almost any other poet of equal greatness, he can be adequately presented in fragments. All his own existence was probably devoted to the cultivation and enjoyment of the fair melodious world which his odes display to us. Bacchylides was probably but a weaker Simonides; and Epicharmus must have been akin to the elder Cean, rather by his shrewd and various knowledge of human nature

and life, than by anything resembling the delightful and masterly compass of song which distinguished the lyric poet. In Simonides we have not only this power of harmonious enchantment, but also a clear and deep reflective insight into the seriousness of our destiny on earth, and the rules of sympathy, tolerance, and earnest labour, by which it may best be wrought to good. These qualities, matured and strengthened by his long and manifold experience, rendered him both a valuable counsellor and a delightful companion to Hiero, while the renowned ruler lived in his Syracuse, in sight of the great mountains and the wide sea, surrounded with the wealth of fruitful Sicily, and honoured by the noblest masters of song and wisdom then existing in the world. We find traces of this cordial intercourse between the poet and the sovereign in more than one anecdote. Immediately after his arrival Simonides succeeded in reconciling Theron of Agrigentum to Hiero; and the alliance was secured by the marriage of the Syracusan prince to Theron's sister. Hiero, on the other hand, sent the poet such a superabundant quantity of provisions, that he was in the habit of selling a portion of them; which indeed was probably the wish of his patron. Being asked by some foolish acquaintance why he did this? he answered quietly, *To exhibit Hiero's magnificence and my moderation.* He probably addressed

poems to Hiero, as Pindar did; and it has been suggested that we have a fragment of one of these in the lines,

48.—CXVII.

Without delight,
What mortal life, what sovereign rule were dear?
If wanting this the gods' estate were drear.

He was also on terms, at least of acquaintance, with the wife of Hiero, in the arrangement for whose marriage he had taken a decisive part. It is said that she once asked him whether it was best to be rich or wise? and that he answered, *Rich; for I see wise men waiting at the doors of the wealthy:* a piece of courteous irony in which the lady probably saw less than all its meaning. In a similar strain of pleasantry it is related that at an entertainment a very large hare was set on the table, but not near the poet, who however had a portion of it sent to him by the prince himself, and immediately parodied a line of Homer (xiv. 33) in the verse

49.—CCXXVIII.

Though large it did not reach as far as me.

But of these traits of the man during the Sicilian years which closed his long life, the most celebrated, and the most remarkable, is his answer to Hiero's question, What is God? *I must ask,* he replied, *a day to consider.* On the morrow his answer to the same inquiry was, that he must have

two days. And at each following demand he doubled the time which would be needful for him to solve the difficulty. At last, when Hiero was wearied out, and begged to know the reason of this proceeding, *It is*, he said, *because the more I reflect upon the matter, the darker I find it.*

Tertullian, it is well known, tells a similar story of Thales and Crœsus, and says, that the simplest Christian could have answered a question, which baffled so wise a Pagan. Bayle, on the other hand, has employed one of the most ingenious and striking essays in his Dictionary to show that there are, even in modern times, and for a man possessing Christian faith, difficulties in the inquiry which it is impossible to get over. Nor is it hard to show that Tertullian at least had no answer ready, the incompleteness of which Simonides could not easily have manifested. The point at issue between Tertullian and Bayle, the Montanist and the Sceptic, might have been rendered a good deal clearer by a consideration of the difference between the knowledge which conscience and religion require,—which is all that Christianity offers, and is indeed far the most important, for it concerns all men,—and the knowledge necessary to supply a basis and centre for a complete development of all we know in lucid and unbroken unity; which is evidently the kind of knowledge of God found so difficult by Simonides. It is plain that religion exhibits the highest and

universal Being in a form to be apprehended by the affections, which is the greatest good that can be accomplished for man. But this form may be much more vague and more limited than the scientific intelligence can rest content with, when it seeks one primary idea, to which all phenomena may, in due degrees, and in their several directions, be subordinated. The religious truth most concerns all men; for all men have affections that tend more or less to the unseen and eternal; and faith is inseparable from the moral law, which the conscience of all men requires. But the multitude have been always, and still are, able to carry on the work of life,—nay, to carry it on, if they so please, honestly and successfully,—with a very shadowy and partial insight into more than the practical uses of a few of the commonest and most necessary objects around them. They are quite incapable of imagining an inquiry which should aim to find a single fundamental source of existence, and to assign the relations to this of all that we know, and of our conscious power of knowing. The religious demand was very inadequately answered by Paganism; and the scientific one was only beginning to be apprehended and feebly responded to when Simonides confessed his ignorance. Nor was it till about the time of his death* that the man was born, who laid the im-

* Simonides died 467: Socrates was born 470 B.C.

movable foundations of philosophy by the principle of the essential unity of all knowledge, and by the development of the idea that in man, and not in the physical universe, we must look for the clearest and highest type of the Archetypal Being. It is impossible however not to feel a strong and pensive interest in bringing together the early childhood and the extreme old age of this great poet, in seeing him join as a boy in the sacrifices of his native town, and after more than threescore years and ten wearying his subtle intellect, his inexhaustible memory, and creative imagination, to discover some distinct position for the reason, by which it might explain and enlarge the object of his own and of his country's religion into a universal ground of being. That which lay between his boyish faith and his hoary inquiry, was a whole human life. The powers within him, which had been thus unfolded and trained, were those which essentially belong to every one. The question was one which lies in the onward road of all human thought; and there are none in whom self-consciousness has ever been awakened, who must not feel as if a dim lantern were moving through the dusky passages of their own existence, when they meditate on the millions of reflections and of images which must have flitted past him, or been successively grouped into different principles, each in turn tried and abandoned, while the old man mused in solitude on the problem of the

source of that being which he shared with the universe, and of which he had experienced so much, yet felt that he understood so little. These reflections give an additional pathos to his answer, when, being asked how long a time he had lived, he replied: *A short time, but many years; for even the thousand years which the gods grant to the Hyperboreans, are only a moment, nay, less than a moment.*

This life, which had been so long graced by genius and fame, ended at ninety (B.C. 467), possessed to the last of the full vigour and harmony of its faculties. Dying at Syracuse, he was buried outside its gates; and his tomb bore this inscription:

> Six times and fifty thou the tripod prize,
> Simonides, didst gain; and dying here
> In Sicily, thy soul so sweet and wise
> To Ceos and to Greece is ever dear.

This tomb was afterwards destroyed by the Agrigentine commander Phœnix in a war with Syracuse, in order to build a tower against the city, which proved the means of its capture.

To the little that is known of the poet's history, which has all been preserved from the significance of the several anecdotes, it may be well to add such sayings of his as are recorded, and the most characteristic remaining specimens of his poetry, before we offer a few words on his writings and character. When some one asked him to write a

panegyrical poem, assuring him that he should always feel grateful for it, Simonides produced two caskets, and said that the one, into which he put the thanks he received, was always empty in time of need; the other, into which he put his money, always full. Being asked who were the best-born men, he answered, *Those descended from a line of wealthy ancestors;* referring doubtless to the want of liberal cultivation in those who had been compelled to earn their own subsistence: for it is evident from his own story that there was in that age felt to be some incongruity between the possession of high and various talents, and the acceptance of a direct price for the exercise of them. He was an admirer of silence, like all men of very eminent thoughtfulness, and probably, like many of them, must often have smiled at his own volubility in praise of it. He said that he had often repented of speaking, but never of holding his tongue. Yet he saw the other side of the truth: for he once addressed a silent guest at an entertaintment with the pithy words, *Friend, if you are a fool, you have been doing wisely; but if wise, foolishly.* Some one told him that he had heard several persons speaking ill of him; and the poet answered, *Then why did not you leave off slandering me with your ears?* in which three simple remarks on the subject of speaking and hearing is perhaps couched all the truth of the matter. When he was asked, why even in old

age he kept on accumulating money, *Because*, he replied, *I would rather at my death leave something to my enemies, than during my life want anything of my friends.* And on a similar occasion he said, that old age had deprived him of most other pleasures, and that he must make the best of his power of enriching himself, which almost alone remained. He called *painting silent poetry, and poetry vocal painting:* and the ancients found in his compositions a vividness of presentation corresponding to his theory. Lastly it may be mentioned that, when a person who had gained a victory in a chariot-race at Olympia with mules, offered him a trifling sum of money for the usual ode, Simonides said that mules were too undignified a topic for poetry; but, on receiving a larger reward, he wrote an ode beginning,

Ye daughters sprung from wind-swift horses, hail!

In which tale, as in several of the others, a reader more sagacious than the mules will rather see the proofs of his dexterous pleasantry, than of the moral meanness very needlessly imputed to him. It is scarcely worth while to ask a question so little likely to be answered as, Who among the patrons or employers of Simonides better deserved or had more hardly earned their wealth?

Among his poems and fragments now extant are several unconnected with any remarkable events in his life, which therefore have not appeared in our

narrative, but which are either beautiful or otherwise characteristic.

The following epigram is a mock inscription for Timocreon, a Rhodian athlete and poet, who had joined the Persians against Greece at the time of the invasion, and was not permitted by Themistocles, after Xerxes had been routed, to return to his own country. The Rhodian had therefore attacked in his writings not only Themistocles, but Simonides, as his friend, and as the great poet of the successful war against the barbarians. The retort of the latter was said to be perfectly justified by the habits of his adversary:

50.—CLXXXVI.

Timocreon of Rhodes, who much devoured,
Much drank, much slandered, lies by death o'erpowered.

The following stanza is a little *scolion*, or song, for the table; and has in the original a delightful elegance and simplicity:

51.—XLII.

Good health for mortal man is best,
And next to this a beauteous form,
Then riches not by guile possessed,
And lastly youth with friendships warm.

These fragments of dancing-songs (hyporchemata) have something of the same character:

52.—XLIII.

Like a reinless courser's bound,
Or an Amyclean hound,
Chase thou with wheeling footstep the song's meandering sound.

53.—XLIV.

As e'er the flowery Dotian ground,
Chasing the horned stag, flies the hound,
And seizes the prey with a deadly bound,
While it turns its neck to gaze around.

The fitness of these passages to be illustrated by the pantomime of the dancers is plain even to us; and this is the point for which they are cited by Plutarch, who describes the poet as excelling in this kind of composition.

The following are specimens of a cast of reflection which seems to have been habitual with him.

54.—LII.

To one dread gulf all things in common tend:
There loftiest virtues, amplest riches end.

55.—LIII.

Long are we dying; reckoned up from birth,
Few years, and evil those, are ours on earth.

56.—LIV.

Of men the strength is small, the hopes are vain,
And pain in life's brief space is heaped on pain;
And death inevitable hangs in air,
Of which alike the good and evil share.

57.—LX.

'Mid mortal beings nought for ever stays;
And thus with beauteous love the Chian says,
The race of man departs like forest leaves;
Though seldom he who hears the truth receives:
For Hope, not far from each, in every heart,
Of men full-grown, or those unripe will start;
And still, while blooms the lovely flower of youth,
The empty mind delights to dream untruth,

Expects nor age nor death, and bold and strong.
Thinks not that sickness e'er can work it wrong.
Ah fools! deluded thus, untaught to scan,
How swiftly pass the youth and life of man.
This knowing, thou, while still thou hast the power,
Indulge thy soul, and taste the blissful hour.

He has no less forcibly expressed another, but not inconsistent truth, in this fragment:

58.—XXXII.

. . . . . And 'tis said
That Virtue, dwelling high on pathless rocks,
A holy goddess, loves the holy place,
And never there is seen by eyes of those
Whom painful labour has not tried within,
And borne them up to manhood's citadel.

The poet Cleobulus had composed an epitaph on a certain Midas, of which the following lines are a version. The *brazen maid* means doubtless a bronze pillar erected on the stone sepulchre, and inscribed with the verses:

A brazen maid am I on Midas' tomb.
While water flows, and trees grow tall and bloom,
While gleams the moon, and rays of sunrise flash,
While rivers run, and ocean billows dash,
Above this mournful grave I still shall rise,
And tell the passer-by here Midas lies.

To these lines Simonides refers as follows:

59.—X.

The Lindian Cleobulus who can praise,
When beyond the river flowing,
And beyond the springtime's growing,
The golden moon and fair sun-rays,

He prolongs a pillar's hour?
For the gods are over all supreme;
But o'er the stone men's hands have power.
So foolish he from whom the theme.

The following inscription is a contrast to that of Cleobulus, as well as to most of those by Simonides himself:

60.—CLXXVIII.

I, Theodorus, dying pleased my foe,
Whose death will please a third: thus all must go.

This fragment, probably of a lament, breathes the poet's most usual feeling:

61.—LI.

* * *

Not even those in former time,
Godlike sons of gods sublime,
Could a painless life prolong,
Pure from sickness, free from wrong,
Nor so to calm old age could climb.

The last citation with which we will illustrate the talents and sentiment of the poet, is one of the most celebrated and most exquisitely beautiful remains of ancient literature. In reading it in the original the same sense of tender and delightful harmony is experienced as in looking at one of the most finished and admirable *reliefs* of Grecian sculpture, with all the superiority possessed by words over every other organ of art.

Danae, according to the legend, was cast into the sea with her child shut up in a chest, and

having, as it seems from an expression in the poem, a lamp beside her. The concluding lines refer to Jupiter as the father of her child.

62.—L.

And when upon the graven coffer fell
The wind, and dashed the watery swell,
With wetted cheeks she sank in mickle fear,
And her hand on Perseus pressed,
And said, My child, what grief is here!
But thou upon my milky breast,
In this mournful brass-bound ark,
Takest thus thy quiet rest,
'Mid the lamp-illumined dark.
Nor the waves that ripple past,
O'er thy long unmoistened hair
Heedest thou, nor voiceful blast,
In thy purple garment laid, thou a face so fair.
But if this pain to thee were pain,
Thine ear had heard my voice complain.
Rest thou, my child, in sleep,
And still may rest the deep,
And rest my boundless woe.
And soon, O father Jove! from thee
May help be sent to us below;
And if my words too boldly flow,
For this my baby's sake forgive thou me.

These translations may afford the kind of help for forming a judgement of Simonides, which rude engravings supply to a person who has not seen the pictures. It will be apparent even in the versions that the poet's characteristics are temperate and simple vigour, and thoughtful pathetic elegance. In him pregnant justness of reflection, and lively distinctness in presenting images, were

surrounded, as with an atmosphere, or ambient evening sea, by a deep and tender humanity, which is the basis of his poetic feeling. An earnest sense of the greatness of valour and generosity was in him closely connected,—as it often is not,—with a clear insight into the difficulty of eminent virtue for man, and a corresponding sagacity and meditative kindliness in allowing for failures and vices, which it is so easy to denounce, and so hard to avoid. In his conversation it seems that there was often a large mixture of irony, in which, while saying what the occasion appeared to require, and what his companions could understand, he inwardly pleased himself with the consideration of the larger and deeper and very different kind of truth which it would have been unsuitable to express: a mode of conversation, the indispensable resource of any one who, seeing farther than those about him, either is not impelled by his temperament to urge and enforce his own convictions upon all, however incapable of receiving them rightly, or who deliberately disapproves of the attempt to do so. The quickness, the precision, and the calmness of his understanding peculiarly fitted him to excel in this mode of expression; and his tact and delicate sympathy enabled him to exercise his skill without offending others. The practice of ironical speaking no doubt indicates a very distinct consciousness of

superiority as to the immediate topic over most of those around. But this is no less manifest in the zealous endeavour to convert them all to our peculiar mode of thinking: and the inevitable ill success is apt to betray itself in fierce denunciations and revilings, which are full as far from charity as is quiet aloofness and the courteous disguise of equivocal expression. It often happens that the only other possible method of social intercourse, for a man serious in his purposes and character, is to withdraw into stern silence, and present himself as an unconquerable dumb protester against every one else, except when an opportunity offers of oracularly disclosing his own opinion, rather seeming to legislate for the inferior beings about him, than to interchange feeling, fancy, and reflection, with congenial neighbours. This sullen moral dignity was not the method of the Cean poet; nor is it that which any poet, any man with a glowing heart and gift of utterance, could bring himself to adopt. Of his imputed avarice little need be said. The transparent brightness and steadiness of his apprehension, which showed itself in his accurate use of words, and in his fresh and bold painting of images, was evidently the ground of that appreciation of objects, which gave them so much value in his eyes, and rendered wealth, the material symbol of all other possessions, even unduly dear to him. At the same time it must be said,

that probably the largest portion of what the ancients wrote on the matter proceeded from folly, malignity, envy, disappointed sycophancy, and from the deep-seated infirmity of man, which tries to supply its own sense of weakness by giving an exaggerated and diseased strength to its fancies, metaphors, hopes, professions, and assertions of all kinds. Simonides played, as was his custom, with those who either unworthily attempted to cozen him into enriching them, or who talked inflated gossip on the subject of his alleged covetousness; and thus he amused himself by strengthening the charge. And though parsimony be, for obvious reasons, an unpopular feeling, it is certainly the least noxious of all others, and not incompatible with noble heights of uprightness and earnestness. The accusation against Simonides, the only one of the least moment, had probably some ground of fact. It points to a structure of character, which is chiefly substantiated by the strong negative evidence that there is nothing known to the contrary in his life or writings,—namely, to a coldness of personal affection. We hear nothing of his family ties, except that he did leave a daughter; nor have we the record of any heart-felt friendships. He stands before us alone, though in the centre of a splendid prospect, and in the vicinity of transcendent characters. Genius is his, and exquisite cultivation and com-

pleteness, a soft, polished amenity, and much of meditative benevolence. But of moral enthusiasm, or of absorbing affection, he was probably less capable than many of his inferiors in intellect and in the sense of ideal harmony. It may however be questioned whether, in trying him by this standard, we do not show a narrow injustice, which he would not have practised towards persons the most unlike himself. The vulgar measure for men is often a mere fictitious combination of inconsistent qualities, such as we find united only in the heroes of dull romances and dramas. The more distance of time or place, or strangeness of story, or height of fame removes any one from the trivial and prosaic circle of daily life, the more unscrupulously is he required to display a monstrous medley of internecine excellencies. It is better for us to take great men as we can get them, not as we fancy we could improve and beautify them. And it is satisfactory to turn from the talk of rhetoricians and scholiasts about Simonides, and enjoy a poem like his *Danae,* where we find what we may be quite certain lay deep in the heart of the man. In this we may see, besides the thorough masterliness of the style, and the perfect roundness and loveliness of the picture, a freedom from exaggeration and a truth of feeling to which little in poetry is equal. The sea is not in any extraordinary commotion; nor is Danae in

convulsions: and with how far more impressive a gleam does her little lamp burn in the darkness, than all the lightnings of the sky, and all the torches of the Furies! The loss of his many works has added to the value of the grains and sparks remaining to us. All these relics, which have not already appeared in this essay, we now subjoin, except a few fragments, consisting of one or two lines, and a very few rather longer portions, which it has been found inexpedient or impossible to render into English verse.

63.—XVIII.

From an Ode to an unknown Conqueror in the Games.

. . . . . And over his head*
Birds without number are flying, and fishes are leaping around,
Out of the deep blue waters won by the tuneful sound.
For no whisper was heard in the air
Of the wind which shakes the leafy glen,
To prevent the song that warbled there,
Gliding within the ears of men.
In the winter thus does Jove's high reason
For a fortnight lull the sea to rest;
And mortals call it the peaceful season
Of the gorgeous halcyon's sacred nest.

64.—LXI.

On Timarchus.

Ah! sore disease, to men why enviest thou
Their prime of years before they join the dead?
His life from fair Timarchus snatching now,
Before the youth his maiden bride could wed.

* This fragment comes from a passage about Orpheus.

65.—LXII.

On Timarchus.

Timarchus, circled in his sire's embrace,
Exclaimed, while breathing out his latest breath,
Timenor's son, henceforth in thought retrace
The strength and calm of soul I keep in death.

66.—CCVI.

On an Olympic Wrestler.

Know, Theognetus won the Olympic wreath
For hands well reined and ruled, the wrestler's crown,
Most fair in form, nor aught in skill beneath
His beauty, honouring thus his noble town.

67.—CCVII.

On a Figure of Hermes.

Leocrates, of Stroebus son, thy love
This bust to Hermes gave, each fair-haired Grace
So honouring: where? in Academia's grove.
The deed I tell to all who tread the place.

68.—CCIX.

On a Statue of Dandes.

The Argive runner Dandes here behold,
Whose victories graced that land of many steeds;
Twice at Olympia won, at Pytho thrice,
At Isthmus twice, at Nemea thrice five times,
Elsewhere more often than can here be said.

69.—LXIII.

On Gorgo.

Young Gorgo dying to her mother said,
While clinging on her bosom wept the maid,
Beside my father stay thou here, and bear
A happier daughter for thine age to care.

70.—LXIV.

On a Person drowned at Sea.

Dark Geranea! would thy woful steep
Saw Danube's flood or Tanais wind below,
And ne'er had heard the loud Scyronian deep
Around snow-clad Moluria's valleys flow.
But now ice-cold the corpse, and void the tomb,
Thus mourning here the shipwrecked voyager's doom.

71.—CLXV.

Inscription for those who saved Tegea.

Through these men's valour into stainless air
The smoke of Tegea's ruin did not burst:
They chose their sons should dwell in freedom there,
And they themselves should fall amid the first.

72.—CLXVI.

Inscription for the Athenians who unsuccessfully defended Tegea.

The men of fearless heart, whose tomb is here,
Who died to rescue Tegea's pastoral town,
Remember we, that Hellas' voice may ne'er
Deny their vanquished heads fair Freedom's crown.

73.—CLXVIII.

Inscription for Shipwrecked Mariners.

Tyrrhenian spoil to Phœbus' fane they led:
One sea, one ship, one tomb now holds them dead.

74.—CLXXII.

Inscription.

I will record,—for 'twere no seemly doom
Had Archenautes' wife a nameless tomb,—
Xanthippe, sprung from Periander's race,
Who held 'mid Corinth's towers the ruler's place.

75.—CLXXIII.

Inscription, or Fragment of an Elegy.

The tomb of Megacles whene'er I see,
Unhappy Callias! then I pity thee.

76.—CLXXIV.

Inscription.

Theognis of Sinope's tomb am I,
By Glaucus reared for ancient amity.

77.—CLXXV.

Thou liest, O Clisthenes, in foreign earth,
Whom wandering o'er the Euxine destiny found:
Thou could'st not reach thy happy place of birth,
Nor seest the waves that gird thy Chios round.

78.—CLXXVI.

Inscription for Cleodemus, who was slain rather than fly before the Thracians.

By shame of flight was Cleodemus led
At deep Theærus' mouth to mournful doom,
Surprised by ambushed Thracians; so he spread
His fame to Diphilus, his father's, tomb.

79.—CLXXVII.

Inscription.

We each lament the loved ones nearest us;
But friends and city mourn Nicodicus.

80.—CLXXIX.

Below Pythonax and his brother lie.
Before they saw their blooming youth pass by.
Their father, Megaristus, raised the tomb
That here for ever shall record their doom.

81.—CLXXX.

Inscription.

A poor man, not a Crœsus, here lies dead,
And small the sepulchre befitting me:
Gorgippus I, who knew no marriage-bed,
Before I wedded pale Persephone.

82.—CLXXXI.

Inscription.

This tomb to Spinther dead his father piled.

83.—CLXXXII.

Inscription for Brotachus the Cretan.

Here I, Gortynian Brotachus, am laid
In death, for which I came not, but for trade.

84.—CCI.

On a Soldier's Spear dedicated to Jove.

Against this pillar tall thou taper spear
Repose, to Jove oracular offered here:
For now thy brass is old, and, worn at length
By warlike uses, thou hast lost thy strength.

85.—CCXIV.

On a Statue of Milo.

Fair statue this of Milo fair, who won
Seven times the Pisan prize, and quailed to none.

86.—CCXV.

On a Statue of Artemis.

This Artemis two hundred drachmas cost
Of Paros, those that bear the goat embossed.
Arcesilas, Aristodicus' son,
Wrought it, as fair as by Athene done.

87.—CCXVI.

On a Crown.

Alcon of Crete to Leto's twin-born son
Devotes the Isthmian crown his boxing won.

88.—CCXVII.

On the Boxer Philon.

Philon am I, Corcyrian Glaucus' son,
Who twice the Olympian prize of boxing won.

89.—CCXVIII.

Here Polygnotus, son of Aglaophon,
The Thracian, painted burning Ilion.

99.—CCXX.

On certain Pictures which had been unjustly criticized.

Not skill-less Cimon painted thee; but thus
Blame finds all works, e'en those of Dædalus.

100.—CCXXI.

On a Picture.

Iphion, he of Corinth, painted this,
With hands, though faultless, doomed their fame to miss.

101.—CCXXI.

On a Painting.

Iphion's hand this painting wrought, whom fed
The water from Pirene's fountain-head.

102.—CCXXIII.

A Fragment.

* * * *

With staves upon their shoulders those before
To Tegea loads of fish from Argos bore.

ON THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS CARLYLE.

(From the London and Westminster Review for 1839.*)*

ALL countries at all times require, and England perhaps at present not less than others, men having a faith at once distinct and large, the expression of what is best in their time, and having also the courage to proclaim it, and take their stand upon it. Many a one there is among us, prompted by the blind fire of feeling and the blast of conscience, who adopts fervently, even fiercely, some mode or fragment of an old creed, pushes it to all extremes, presses it on all hearers, and exhibits all the self-reliance and vehemence of a prophet, but one to whom clear vision is wanting. For where the general insight and elevation necessary in our day for an adequate view of man exist, there must the difficulties be most keenly felt, which lie in the way of any recognised tradition, or render it at least insufficient. Knowledge without belief, and belief without knowledge, divide in the main the English world between them. The apparent exceptions are generally cases of compromise, when men are content to half-believe one thing, and half-say another; for a whole belief would demand its own complete expression. And in the repeating by rote, for the sake of quiet, of

popular creeds and formulas, the sense of discontent and doubt, which lurks in the heart, asserts itself by stammering and reluctant sighs or sneers. Semi-sincere persuasions, semi-candid declarations, make up our limbo of public opinion. There is often, perhaps most often, heart in the words; but often too,—how often who dare ask? within the heart a lie.

It is not to be denied that we have also in literature and society many a man who proposes his scheme of human life and of the universe. But they almost all labour under the evil that these schemes are fatally partial or superficial. Some one breaks off a corner of our nature,—calls it suggestion, or association, or self-interest, or sympathy, or pleasure and pain, or profit and loss, or the nervous system; and, lifting up the fragment, says, *Behold! this is the essence of man.* He builds a hut with a few stones of Thebes or Babylon in the corner of some immeasurable ruin, and exclaims, *Lo! the hundred-gated town restored! See here rebuilt the city of the great king!*

As these theories, which all have their plausibility, their use, and their vestige of truth in them, take in but some small grains, but some faint shadows of what man is; therefore the living soul of man, with its longings and capacities of faith, refuses to acknowledge them. They sprung from no unfathomable depth of craving for reality, glow with no full stream of life; and accordingly

they have no hold on any but the cold and recluse spinner of inferences, or the empty self-seeker of this world, who considers knowledge as ornamental, and looks at himself in the mirror, whether of glass or of human eyes, with more complacency when he can say, *I too am a philosopher.*

Of all such pale and shrivelled theories it is the common characteristic, that they belong to minds skilled more or less in dialectics and the management of terms, but poorly furnished with the large and solid stuff of human nature, which should furnish the premises of their schemes. The senses indeed may be acute, and the appetites voracious, as well as the understanding quick and patient; but the breast is comparatively empty of love, of hope, of awe; the will disdains to bow under aught higher than itself; and the dead artificial parasol of self-conceit, which can be raised or lowered, opened or folded, painted and tricked out at pleasure, is substituted for the infinite concave of Heaven, beneath whose vault man walks at once humbled and inspired.

Of such speculators it is the inevitable and deadly lot, that the overpowering consciousness of what is lowest and most chaotic in us, rather than of the higher and brighter,—the spirit-man,—supplies the materials which the intellect works on, from which it draws its thin unbroken clue

of speculation: and having only this to start from and to shape with, the finer and truer the power of syllogizing, the more coherently worthless is the whole result. Of far nobler and more fruitful promise than such a man, is the poor bewildered visionary, perhaps fanatic, who feels a surge of dim forces in his soul, which he cannot explain, or can only explain into something as unsubstantial as a dream. On his great world of life, now confused and dark, peace will assuredly one day descend, and morning open. He will find that Paradise was preparing for him, while it seemed to him that all was hell. But in our day such visionaries are less and less possible. The spread of shallow but clear knowledge, like the cold snow-water issuing from the glaciers, daily chills and disenchants the hearts of millions once credulous. Daily therefore does it become more probable that millions will follow in the track of those who are called their betters. Thus will they find in the world nothing but an epicurean stye, to be managed, with less dirt and better food, by patent steam-machinery, but still a place for swine, though now the swine may be washed, and their victuals more equally divided.

Is it not strange then that in such a world, in such a country, and among those light-hearted Edinburgh Reviewers, a man should rise and proclaim a creed; not a new and more ingenious form of words, but a truth to be embraced with

the whole heart, and in which the heart shall find, as his has found, strength for all combats, and consolation, though stern not festal, under all sorrows? Amid the masses of English printing sent forth every day, part designed for the most trivial entertainment, part black with the narrowest and most lifeless sectarian dogmatism, part, and perhaps the best, exhibiting only facts and theories in physical science, and part filled with the vulgarest economical projects and details, which would turn all life into a process of cookery, culinary, political, or sentimental,—how few writings are there that contain, like these, a distinct doctrine as to the position and calling of man, capable of affording nourishment to the heart, and support to the will, and in harmony at the same time with the social state of the world, and with the most enlarged and brightened insight which human wisdom has yet attained to!

We have been so little prepared to look for such an appearance, that it is difficult for us to realize the conception of a genuine coherent view of life thus presented to us in a book of our day, which shall be neither a slight compendium of a few moral truisms, flavoured with a few immoral refinements and paradoxes, such as constitute the floating ethics and religion of the time; nor a fierce and gloomy distortion of some eternal idea, torn from its pure sphere of celes-

tial light, to be raved about by the ignorant, whom it has half enlightened, and half made frantic. But here, in our judgement,—that is, in the judgement of one man, who speaks considerately what he fixedly believes,—we have the thought of a wide, and, above all, of a deep soul, which has expressed, in fitting words, the fruits of patient reflection, of piercing observation, of knowledge many-sided and conscientious, of devoutest awe, and faithfullest love. To expound his faith in our language will seem not unpresumptuous, while his own is at hand, and may be read by all. But, as a hint and foretaste of what is written in his works, it may be said that Mr. Carlyle thus teaches:

1. The Universe, including Man as its Chief Object, is all a region of Wonder and mysterious Truth, demanding, before all other feelings, Reverence, as the Condition of Insight.

2. For he who rejects from his Thoughts all that he cannot perfectly analyse and comprehend, all that claims veneration, never will meditate on the primary fact of Existence. Yet what is so necessary to the Being of a Thing, so certainly the deepest secret in it, as Being itself? All else in an object,—all qualities and properties viewed without reference to this, which is their root and life,—cannot, rightly speaking, be understood, though they may be counted, measured, and handled.

3. Religion therefore is the highest bond between Man and the Universe. The world rises out of unknown sacred depths before the soul, which it ever draws into contemplation of it. It repels the man into entire ignorance, only when he fails to acknowledge the unfathomable Depth which he and it belong to.

4. But at best we are immensely ignorant. Around us is a fulness of life, now vocal in a tone, now visible in a gleam, but of which we never can measure the whole compass, or number and explore the endless forces.

5. Yet, to him who looks aright, the Divine Substance of all is to be seen kindling at moments in the smallest, no less than in the grandest thing that is: for Existence is itself divine, and awakens in him who contemplates, a sense of divinity, such as men of old were fain to call prophetic.

6. This sense of the Divine, penetrating and brightening a man's whole nature, attuning his utterance, and unfolding into images that blaze out of the darkness of custom and practice, and shape themselves into a completeness of their own,—this is Poetry,—the highest Form of the God-like in Man's being, the freest recognition of the God-like in All.

7. As there is a poetic Light dormant in all Things, to which the Music of our Feelings gives the signal of awakening,—so especially is this true of man, in whom dwells the Knowledge of Existence, as well as the Fact.

8. Thus the seer finds in his brethren, of every age and land, the most perplexing, startling, woeful, but also the highest, fairest, amplest, all-suggestive figures of his life-long vision.

9. But to know and understand even Man is not for man the foremost task. We are made, by the craft of Nature,—of Him whom Nature clothes, veils, and manifests,—chiefly to be ourselves Makers. To work, to do, is our calling,—that for which we were called forth to be.

10. Knowledge and Strength, in their highest and most harmonious energy, are the reward only of the noblest effort. But all who toil in any work, when the work is not a mere winnowing of chaff, are doing humanly, worthily.

11. Therefore to trace men and their ways through the dusky mazes of the Past, and among all the confusions of our own time,—to see what they are doing, and how, and why,—is itself a work fit for a thoughtful and affectionate mind, and will not be without fruit either for them or him.

12. But in this survey of all things round us, and in the experience of ourselves, which we shall certainly gain if we attempt such devout and sympathetic observation, Evil, Grief, Horror, Shame, Follies, Errors, Frailties of all kinds, will needs press upon the eye and heart. And thus the habitual temper of the best will rather be strenuous and severe than light and joyous.

13. A cutting sorrow, a weary indignation will not be far from him who duly weighs the world. But in unswerving labour for high ends, in valour and simplicity, in truth with himself and with all men, there shall still be a sustaining power. So shall he have faith in a good ever present, but bleeding and in mourners' garments, among the sons of men. And by perseverance to the end life may be completed bravely and worthily, though with no bacchanalian triumph.

We are far from wishing any one to pin his faith on these propositions, either as absolutely, still less as completely true, or as adequate statements of Mr. Carlyle's views. They have indeed been deduced, not without care, from his writings; and those who read them with reflection and a tentative sympathy will hardly fail to see in them the representation of a pure and lofty mind, and one original, if only in this, that his doctrine is but the dogmatic form of his whole feelings and character, and not a web of abstract speculation.

If in these views were not included a full recognition of the worth of Christianity, there would be much reason to accuse them of fatal error. But such a man as we have spoken of, with such convictions, is not likely to be guilty of callous sneers against any devout faith in things beyond the region of the senses; least of all,

against that religion which has strengthened and glorified the lives of a greater number of the truest heroes and martyrs, than all other worships, and all philosophies together. The gospel, the good tidings of Jesus of Nazareth, not merely have now come to be taken for granted by the many, but are recognised by whosoever is of purest purpose and most comprehensive thought among civilized men, as, on grounds of intelligible reason, of experienced accordance with our deepest cravings, and of unquestionable results in history and in the hearts of men, the most effective word of truth ever communicated to this earth. The countless dreams which have been spun around it, the frauds practised in its name, the carnal battles waged for its spiritual watchwords, the bewildering varieties of schemes, sects, heresies, speculations, laws, rites, customs, crimes, and miseries, which have been joined to it, and have seemed to spring from it, are all but so many proofs of the far-spreading roots which it has struck into the world, and which have twisted themselves among all the fibres that fill the whole soil of human life, and have modified the growth of all its products. The plough, the hammer, and the loom, the Roman laws, the arts of Greece, including among them the alphabet which Greece imported, are not more inextricably bound up with all civilized existence, than the influences, avowed or disguised, of the message published by

the Hebrew fishermen. The full and clear power of Christianity rises indeed so far above the heads of any but the fewest, that to most it seems cloudlike amid the clouds. But it works unseen and under many names; and it has victories prepared for it beyond the splendour of its prophetic symbols, tinged as these are with the colours of one period and country; while its spirit will inevitably spread to all, and diffuse itself through every instant of future time.

Of the main view as to the world, which we have attributed to Mr. Carlyle, it is evident that the great fountain is the literature of Germany during the last sixty years. This is not merely apparent from the citations which he makes, the men he delights in, and the key-words and peculiar turns of expression which he employs; but the proof of it lies in the thought itself. All the higher minds of Germany, beginning at least with Lessing, have seen and taught, not that there is a scheme of divine truth, called Christianity, on one side, and on the other a heap of vulgar experiences and notions, called the World, the two connected by a rope, longer or shorter, weaker or tougher, called Evidences of Religion; but that human existence, and the universe which it belongs to, are alike manifestations of a higher Idea, which breaks out in all true knowledge, and above all, but not exclusively, in what is called, and is, Revelation. To exhibit more and

more of this truth in adequate images, and with fitting melody, has been the aim of all the nobler and more genuine artists, and especially the poets of Germany. To establish it by historical enquiry, to show a high reason pervading the low confusions of all ages, has been the inspiring purpose of her historians, animating them to a generous laboriousness too little practised in such works among us. To determine with speculative precision the limits and being of this Idea, or productive truth, not itself to be seen save by the clear vision of the purest inward eye, to free it from arbitrary commixtures, and display it as a sufficient fontal source of all we know and all we are, has been the great problem of those wondrous philosophers from Kant to Hegel, the most peculiar and surprising children of the latest age of human history. Of all these classes of men, united in the pursuit of a common object, by means however various, it has been the felt, still more than the asserted principle, that the truth they sought can only be attained by reverent and conscientious toil. Faith in that Higher than actual Things, of which these are the reflection, prepares men for beholding it, and lends an interest to the facts which otherwise they never could possess. Even in its imperfect, partial displays, this higher unseen Subsistence has supplied the energy and light of all religions upon earth. In its chief historical radiation it has been, rather

than been mingled with, Christianity: and in its fulness and purity consists the Christian religion of the wisest and most faithful spirits. But this supersensual, infinite Reality, of which all phenomena are but gleams and echoes, has spoken in all times more or less forcibly home to the hearts of all men who have ever rejoiced with trembling at the name of God.

In this general point of view, and the bent of soul which it implies, Mr. Carlyle is entirely at one with the Germans; whose tendencies are daily mingling more and more with the whole thought of the best minds in Europe. These views indeed have been often very indirectly conveyed to those who now partake of them, and who are sometimes furiously ungrateful for a benefit, of which one wishes therefore to believe them unconscious. The speculations of Coleridge, which are daily working wider and wider changes among us, were altogether cast, and in his case avowedly, in a German mould. But in no one known in English letters has the influence of that old fatherland of England been so apparent and bold as in Mr. Carlyle. Yet there is not any among those Teutonic seers, sages, and singers, to whom he can be very closely likened.

For professed philosophers, knowledge is the end of existence. They live in order to think. The universe presents itself to them as a conflux of forces, subter-human, human, and superhuman,

working to the perpetual production and sustenance of a boundless living whole, which it is their special vocation to apprehend and contemplate, and so to rise to the view of the primordial truth, which originates and lights up all. Now with Mr. Carlyle this is not the case. He casts aside all slighter and more partial theories than those matured by these great thinkers, as insufficient for the spirit of a wise man in our day. But by him the best wisdom is valued as a means of the best work. To know is not his end, but to be. He seeks to be wise, in order to be worthy; and by the same measure strives to judge whatever representation or fact of human life is brought before him. To struggle manfully in doing the highest work within our power, at all costs of outward contradiction,—to be consistent and complete in a true purpose, down to the most trifling detail of every day, word, and thought,—and to live thus, not by calculation, with pedantic self-conscious accuracy, but by dint of an impulse of heroism and conviction energizing in the whole character, and moulding it altogether,—this is the task which in his view is given to man.

Therefore to the noblest of mere philosophers he stands related somewhat in this way. The speculative seer, if of a high and genuine order, must needs by spiritual instinct regard the universe as a divine vision, and the reason as an inspired organ for beholding this; which is equally

the implicit faith of philosopher, poet, and hero. But the sage is by nature and purpose also a dialectician, and labours to define the primal truth he sees, to pursue it into all its ramifications, and to show that these afford, or indeed are, the true solution of all the facts and classes of facts, which direct observation discloses to all men, but which it cannot interpret. Now the systematic process of ratiocination is one from which Mr. Carlyle turns with comparative indifference. He values the master truth of the philosopher, not as an idea to be worked upon, and minutely evolved by the understanding, but to be taken into the character and affections, to rule the will, and to shape and glorify the whole structure of the man and of his life.

Neither does he exactly resemble the poets, in whom he so much delights, and whose worth he has so keenly insisted on. These men, especially Goethe, Schiller, and Jean Paul, but also all great creative singers, having a true insight into the wondrousness and depth of things, and the harmony in which they grow together in the midst of conflicts and jarrings, which are themselves essential to this harmony, do not make it their business to unfold the idea of it as an object of speculation. Nor do they directly labour to realize it more evidently in practice and fact. But stirred and enlightened by it, and filled from it with a breath of its melodious joy, they shape

its images as given them from without, and newborn within their souls, into fresh and fair semblances, that reproduce, in partial shows of the whole, a more vocal and facile display of its true being. Their own delight in the beauty and worth of real existence pours itself into their reproduction of it. Aiming neither at teaching men as the philosopher, nor at exciting and organizing them anew on a nobler model, as the practical hero, they indirectly impart their own living consciousness of truth, and draw men, without exhorting them, towards the higher regions where the poet dwells rejoicing.

Such is not the case with Mr. Carlyle: he does not rest at ease in the contemplation of fair pictures of life, leaving them to find their own reception, and work silently their own vague effect upon mankind. The practical problem and struggle of Man entirely possesses him. With its force he speaks; towards its aim he works. He seldom relaxes to enjoy the aspect of images, however beautiful, however familiar to his heart, unless they have a direct significance and efficiency for this end. And finding no sufficient peace in the music of sweet song, he loves the resounding lyre which builds up the walls of cities, or the blast of the trumpet which throws them down.

Not that he wants poetry, any more than philosophy. But they are his wings, and not his

heaven. His heart and mouth are full of them; but they are not the springs of his existence. The man among the Germans, whose works at first sight his undoubtedly the most resemble, is that strange, huge mass of lambent, innocuous fire, full of gas-jets and grotesque tongues, and salamanders and flaming eyes,—Jean Paul Richter. They are like, in the apparent rudeness, harshness, lawless capriciousness of style, full of meanings and images, but these looking incoherent, or at least as yet unreconciled. Both constantly use words sanctioned by no custom or even precedent, and of course, though often expressive, sometimes not compensating for their oddness by any special felicity. In both it looks as if there were strong, nay overpowering, self-will and self-consciousness. The thought, as well as speech, often finds its sufficient explanation in the peculiarities of individual character, rather than in the demands and laws of the matter handled. In neither is there much exercise of skill in logical abstractions and their discipline, or much clear delineation of objects, uncoloured by the particular and casual feelings of the artist. As to their views of human life, they have also much in common. The ground in both appears to be furnished by a deep and fervid sense of whatever is noblest and fairest in man's active powers,—and this realized not only in the imaginative consciousness, but in the personal character

of each. Alike they shrink with fastidious and self-complacent vivacity from all the forms, blazonries, and authorities of social existence, when these happen to be insufficiently supported by the worth of the men, whom Nature's habitual irony has thus dignified. A fine and genuine, nay stern and sublime enthusiasm, a puritanic Quixotism, for the lovely, the true, the right, the everlasting,—is heightened and softened in both by the perpetual presence of a graver than Cervantean humour, which blends with and repeats the lofty feeling in a mode of kindred contrast. Both the German and the Englishman use whatever portions and aspects of the phenomenal world they advert to, neither for their simple and direct beauty, nor as facts having their meaning and purport in themselves, but as hints and whispers of a higher and unseen world, the proper abode of man. In each there is a fulness and warmth of nature, which would suffice to place them among the sacred band, the immortals of history. And in each also there is something unfashioned, excessive, tumultuous, far indeed from the vulgar chaotic fury and darkness of passions and prejudices, but still at war with the brightness and heavenly peace, which are rather suggested and promised to the heart, than made apparent to the eye.

With these obvious points of resemblance, there are also very considerable discrepancies, partly

doubtless to be explained by the difference of time, still more by that of country, and most of all by that original variety of structure, which shows itself between every pair of ploughmen, nay of plough-horses, and more and more clearly comes out as the effect of a universal law, the higher we rise in the class of beings we contemplate. The two men, of whom we speak, are of the highest that the earth produces, the genial teachers of truth, and inspired painters of symbols for the fundamental realities of our existence. The distinctions between the two are accordingly deep and extensive. In Jean Paul, much as there is of struggle, and, in details, of unappeased contradiction and jarring unevenness, the prevalent spirit is that of earnest, eager, childlike sympathy. This fills him most often with joy, always with satisfaction. The healthful, cordial abundance of his emotions and fancies is all he needs. Thus replete and bright with the best gifts of life, after a youth of bitter pangs and conflicts, his heart seems to repose in its own ceaseless activity, and unweariedly creates new images of men's unaffected joys and ennobling sorrows, and unlimited powers of love and hope. But (in this a true poet) all life is for him only a storehouse of expressive, shining, startling, or burlesque images. With Mr. Carlyle the case is far otherwise: he lives to fight, breathes war-flames of disdain and zeal, and moves only to wrestle and trample forward.

The clearness of the eye to see whatever is permanent and substantial, and the fervour and strength of heart to love it as the sole good of life, are thus in our view Mr. Carlyle's pre-eminent characteristics, as those of every man entitled to the fame of the most generous order of greatness. Not to paint the good which he sees and loves, or see it painted, and enjoy the sight,—not to understand it, and exult in the knowledge of it,—but to take his position upon it, and for it alone to breathe, to move, to fight, to mourn, and die,—this is the destination which he has chosen for himself. His avowal of it, and exhortation to do the like, is the object of all his writings. And, reasonably considered, it is no mean service to which he is thus bound. For the real, the germinal truth of nature is not a dead series of physical phenomena, into the like of which all phenomena are cunningly to be explained away. This pulseless, rigid iron frame-work, on which the soft soil of human life is placed, and above which its aerial flowers and foliage rise, does not pass with him for the essential and innermost principle of all. It is rather that which, being itself poorest, the poorest of faculties can apprehend. As physical mechanism, it is that which is most palpable and undeniable by any; because it is that which lies nearest the nothingness, whence it has been hardly rescued, and is therefore most akin to minds in whose meanness of structure or culture

even human existence might seem scarce better than nothingness. He knows, few in our nation so well, that, of a world of mere machinery, the highest king and priest would be the neatest clock-work figure. And in such a world a being feeling ever towards a somewhat beyond what he can weigh and measure, and looking up to find above himself that which is too high for him to understand, would be an anomaly as lawless and incredible as the wildest fabled monster, the Minotaur, the Chimera, the Titan,—the Sphynx itself,—nay a more delirious riddle than any that in dreams it proposes to us.

On the other hand, neither is that for him the solid, abiding, inexhaustible, which is received as such by popular acquiescence. It must needs be a truth which the spirit, cleared and strengthened by manifold knowledge and experience, and above all by strong and stedfast endeavour, can rest in, and say: *This I mean, not because it is told me, were my informants all the schools of Rabbins, or a hierarchy of angels; but because I have looked into it, tried it, found it healthful and sufficient, and thus know that it will stand the stress of life.* We may be right or wrong in our estimate of Mr. Carlyle; but we cannot be mistaken in supposing that on this kind of anvil have all truly great men been fashioned, and of metal thus honest and enduring.

Further, it must be said that, true as is his

devotion to the truth, so flaming and cordial is his hatred of the false, in whatever shapes and names delusions may show themselves. Affectations, quackeries, tricks, frauds, swindlings, commercial or literary, baseless speculations, loud ear-catching rhetoric, melodramatic sentiment, moral drawlings and hyperboles, religious cant, clever political shifts, and conscious or half-conscious fallacies, all in his view, come under the same hangman's rubric,—proceed from the same offal heart. However plausible, popular, and successful, however dignified by golden and purple names, they are lies against ourselves,—against whatever in us is not altogether reprobate and infernal. His great argument, the theme of his song, the spirit of his language, lies in this, that there is a work for man worth doing, which is to be done with the whole of his heart, not the half or any other fraction. Therefore, if any reserve be made, any corner kept for something unconnected with this true work and sincere purpose, the whole is thereby vitiated and accurst. So far as his arm reaches he is undoing whatever in nature is holy, ruining whatever is the real creation of the great Worker of All. This truth of purpose is to the soul, what life is to the body of man;—that which unites and organizes the mass, keeping all the parts in due proportion and concord, and restraining them from sudden corruption into worthless dust.

From this turn of mind and ground-plan of

conviction it follows that to Mr. Carlyle the objects of chief interest are memorable persons,—men who have fought strongly the good fight. And more especially, though not exclusively, does he revere and study those living nearest to our own time and circumstances, in whom we may find monumental examples of the mode in which our difficulties are to be conquered. These men he rejoices and eminently succeeds in delineating, in enabling us to see what is essential and physiognomical in each, and how the facts of nature and society favoured and opposed the formation of his life into a large completeness. The hindrances such a man had to overcome, the energies by which he vanquished them, and the work, whatever it may have been, which he thus accomplished for mankind, appear in these pictures with lucid clearness, marked with a force and decision of hand and style worthy of the greatest masters.

Thus having taken anxious measure of the perplexities and dangers of human life in its higher progresses, he has learnt also to pity, with a mother's tenderness, the failings and confusions of those against whom these hostile forces have prevailed. His proudest and most heroic odes in honour of the conquerors are mingled with or followed by some strain of pity for those who have fallen and been swallowed up in the conflict. The dusky millions of human shapes that flit around us, and in history stream away, fill him with an

almost passionate sorrow. Their hunger and nakedness, their mistakes, terrors, pangs, and ignorances, press upon his soul like personal calamities. Of him, more than of all other English writers, perhaps writers of any country, it is true, that not in words and fits of rhetorical sentiment, but in the foundation of his being, man, however distant and rude a shadow, is to him affecting, venerable, full of a divine strength, which, for the most part, is rather cramped and tortured than ripened to freedom in this fleshly life and world. This kind of feeling must be felt as truly distinguishing him by all who read his works. For though similar expressions to some of his have been used by many, from no one, at least in our language, have they proceeded with so resolute and grand a force of radiant clearness and adamantine conviction.

Only when the sufferers are in the foreground and his main objects, does he seem to forget that their oppressors or despisers, the tyrannous, luxurious, frivolous, empty-hearted, are also themselves victims, playing the part of destroyers; that circumstances had done wrong to them, no less than to those whom they harass and degrade; and that to be slowly poisoned with sweet baits in the flush and abundance of life, and so to sink away in sottish dreams, is not at all less horrible, than to be gradually starved and worn to death, while courage, or at least dumb endurance, confronts

the inevitable blow, and hope whispers in the sharpened ear, that a better destiny lies beyond. But when these base and selfish souls of lower earth,—the men of pleasure, who to all beneath them are men of pain,—come themselves before him, he well comprehends what they perhaps could least understand, that they too are to be pitied as well as blamed; although the tragedy of their lives is not that to which it is most important to call a world of spectators.

Thus loving the ideal realized in things and persons, not expounded in systematic thought,—zealous as a missionary for the concrete, and towards the abstract severe as an inquisitor,—this writer very naturally holds in detestation all attempts to give dialectics any important place in human life. He admits indeed that reflection inevitably produces thoughts, which find no sufficient symbols in any single objects, but are the ideal roots of whole classes of existence, and finally pass into one great principle of life, originating and organizing all that is. But the attempt to define this in any precise form of words, though it has been the aim, as he admits, of many of the greatest among men, meets with small sympathy from him. Above all does he scorn, rend, explode, and excommunicate, while he despises, the endeavour to trace out the various lines and steps by which this first principle is logically arrived at, and then again from it are deduced the con-

ceptions corresponding to the facts of the universe.

Now although in Mr. Carlyle's view of this matter there be, as we believe, some, perhaps much prejudice, his judgement is mainly determined by an indubitable truth, which he sees with clearest eyes, and only, as we think, regards it too exclusively. It is certain that men with whom this enterprise of logical construction and deduction has been the great task of life, have seldom been open to a sufficient course of outward and inward experience, not to undervalue all but the scanty set of facts on which they base their scheme. Nay more, inasmuch as these facts have not been looked at by the light of analogies from many others, there are sides even of them which the theory takes no account of. Thus it never can exhaust, that is, adequately interpret, even the things which it counts worthy of notice. The man, fancying his brain the sunny mirror of the universe, lives in fact in a small sham world, where there is at best a spark of light amid thick shadows that wear hardly a semblance of realities.

Further still, as he who has devoted himself exclusively or chiefly to the formation and arrangement of definitions, is likely to have been led thereto by a preponderance of the merely ratiocinative faculty, and a deficiency of the nobler and more substantial powers, these, and their correlatives in objects, are not what he is apt to

seek for or to acknowledge anywhere. His theory is likely to leave out whatever is deepest and most essential in the universe. Now all things being linked together and interfused, in the lowest things there must be some power or capacity corresponding to something above it, and by which it is ultimately related to the highest of all. But this is precisely what the too narrow and mechanical inquirer cannot comprehend. Therefore even the lowest and most lifeless forms of things, which correspond best to his own stiff and angular faculty of reasoning, are, as to their true meaning and most important relations, altogether beyond his ken.

As the merely logical thinker is apt to be thus defective in his views, so also in his practice is he sure to be detected as artificial and abortive. By a judicious use of the phraseology of the day, and the exercise of conjuring ingenuity in rather a higher than the manual mode, he may easily pass, while he deals only with words, for a wise, almost an all-wise, Doctor. But when he comes to deal with things as a practical worker, his ignorance of that which is essential in them necessarily baffles him, as often as he quits the vulgar empirical rules which rest merely on unsystematic experience. Success in his own department of definition and refutation, and blindness to all beyond it, fill him with hopeless conceit and self-assurance; and failing in all that he attempts practically, he will

most often be led to throw the blame upon the poor unconscious World, which, having its own affairs to attend to, obstinately and spitefully will not be, what he has so demonstratively proved it is.

As Mr. Carlyle now plaintively, now indignantly teaches, no less does such a man fail when he undertakes to delineate objects as an artist, than when he handles them as a practician. For this too it is necessary that he should in the first place know what is truly vital in each thing, or at all events in that central one to which in his new creation the others are to be related, that so he may light this with a blaze of imagination, and leave out of view only the accidental, partial, and insignificant.

There is then a true and most pregnant, nay a humane meaning in the constant flayings and extirpations to which the merely logical man is subjected by Mr. Carlyle. But his treatment is so hard, that any bowels of compassion, not unnaturally and dangerously indurated, must yearn towards the sufferer, thus dissected alive, while the operator moreover grins during the process with a disdainful glee, harder to be borne than much anatomy. Even with this alarming example before us, we may venture to suggest that all human beings must be more or less abstract thinkers; and that, though logical thinking is much and fatally overrated, when it withdraws

men's attention from the premises to the mode of arguing from them, yet it is of indispensable use in giving clearness and compactness to our knowledge, and enabling us, with light mastery, to impart it to others. It is also certain that of some of the wisest of mankind, it has been the special vocation to be dialecticians. Of the schoolmen, for instance, whom Mr. Carlyle speaks of, as if they had been employed literally, not figuratively, in splitting hairs, there can be no serious doubt that the divine promptings of their age, and of their own souls, impelled them to the worthiest study of the most arduous problems of man's existence. They laboured for the highest end then known among mankind, with a zeal and insight, according to the measure of what was then possible, which has seldom been equalled in later times. In the fourteenth century Luther would have been, as Wickliffe was, a pre-eminent schoolman. And Mr. Carlyle, could he have been then born, would, like Dante, have been imbued with the Aristotelian method, and have been ready to encounter all opponents in arguments founded on Peter Lombard, and marshalled in all the forms of syllogistic mood and figure.

We have said that this writer's great power is in historic delineation of men and events, to which he gives extraordinary vividness and boldness; and this, not by knack or system, or a draughtsman's eye for the outwardly picturesque, but by

intense feeling of the effectual and expressive everywhere, and of the relation in which all objects stand to the natural hearts of men. But there is another series of facts, for which his mind is far less generously open, than for the characters and deeds of persons. These are the beliefs, which each age and individual has framed for himself or accepted. To these he does not give much heed; of course not denying, or mistaking, the certainty that all beliefs have followed each other in the history of the world according to a fixed law, and are connected by the same with all the circumstances of each generation, and that, in obedience to this law, they emerge, unfold themselves, pass away, or are transmuted into other modes of faith. But he dwells on little else than the importance of the spirit with which the creed is held, the degree of seriousness and devotion in the believer's mind, —rather than the quality and amount of truth which his belief embodies.

Now it is no unfruitful and minute, but a spacious and teeming field of thought, which spreads before us when we begin to inquire, not so much what manner of man was Heraclitus, or Plato, Athanasius, or Luther, or Leibnitz,—as what was the doctrine that each of them taught; what view did it unfold of Nature, Man, and God; how was it linked with what had gone before, and what followed it; and how did the truth of the one mind become moulded by the thoughts of genera-

tions, before it passed into the reason of the following sage; and how changed by him did it again go forth to create and burn within the bosoms of its next inheritors?

Assuredly Mr. Carlyle would not deny this to be worth considering. But it is not a study with which, so far as we can see, he concerns himself peculiarly. And in consequence of this indifference of his, one is sometimes tempted in reading him to fancy that in his view it is only a delusion, however unavoidable, by which importance is attached to the beliefs and denials of mankind; the honesty and zeal with which we believe being very slightly dependent on the object of our faith. No doubt the stupid arrogance of multitudes does lean with ridiculous weight on many theories or phrases, which for them in their state of feeling might really be shuffled and interchanged, and redistributed among the contending parties by mere chance, without any but the slightest effect upon their state of soul. And remarkable it sometimes is, when an ordinary mortal, who unwillingly pays his yearly taxes, and willingly reads his daily newspaper, professes, with full belief that he believes, some scheme of faith such as might suit a disguised archangel, such as ought to encircle the adoring head with a halo of mythological glories, and raise the feet in sovereign loftiness above the cares and perturbations of mortality, while the man shall all the while be

crawling in the mire, and thinking only of his prospective mess of pottage. Yet there is some relation, most definite and certain, however indirect, between his creed and him. The fetish religion of Africa as clearly bears the marks of negro barbarism, as the Epicurism of Lucretius and the Stoicism of Marcus Aurelius express the refinement of Rome. The philosophy of Aristotle is not accidentally, but by the necessity of the man's constitution and circumstances, distinct from that of Plato, the theology of Augustine from that of Fenelon, and again the speculations of the Brahmins from those of the Rabbins. It must be worth while to understand what these distinctions are, whence they arise, and to what they tend; for the expressed belief is a standard, though not an infallible one, whereby to ascertain that real belief, which is as genuine a fact of man's life as any other. No belief is ever professed by any one, which has not been at some time the real conviction of somebody. And the thoughts that a man thinks are, when we can really ascertain them, as significant of what he is as any action of his life.

Having thus spoken of what seem to us some of Mr. Carlyle's most important peculiarities, positive and negative, we have still to notice one as striking as any, and perhaps as deeply essential to the man,—we mean his humour; which is most nervous and original in quality, and in his whole

mode of thought is pervading and constitutive. Yet he is not a humourist; for, as Coleridge* has set forth, and as common opinion holds, it seems necessary to this type of man, that the whim, the oddity, should not merely tinge the feelings, but determine the bent of the character. Now whatever there is of fantastic and grotesque in the mind, assuredly in this case has no such preponderating force: yet it perpetually appears in the mode of viewing objects and expressing thoughts, notching the composition with queerest zigzags and intricate turns of foliage, and carving the massive and deeply-shaded surfaces with many a mocking preter-human visage.

Let us then, in the first place, try to understand what humour is. It implies and is grounded in a peculiar view of human life, which view, when it rules the man's convictions and conduct, makes him a humourist: when it affects only a part of his discourse, and what is lighter and more superficial in his actions and demeanour, the humour may be perfectly true and vigorous, but the man is something more than a humourist, which ceases to be his proper designation.

---

* Literary Remains, vol. i. p. 135. There is here a very interesting account of the different kinds of the ludicrous. But it seems difficult to understand the distinction between wit of thoughts, which Coleridge assigns specially to the Italians, and wit of words, which he attributes to the French. Wit of words cannot mean an odd clatter of sounds; and what is a word but a sound expressing a thought?

The view of life which may properly be called humorous, seems to arise from the tendency to connect the mean and monstrous with what in itself is serious and majestic. The insane and utterly abortive, the squalid rags and ejected off-scourings of existence, have in themselves nothing to move laughter or give pleasure. Yet this, or something approaching to this, some mode of imbecility, something vile and rotten, is found as a portion of all representations which are valued as humorous; not indeed in all comic delineations; for in these the mere inconsistency in some of the externals of life is often all, and enough. The sharpest, loudest contrasts and discords between things which none of them strongly interest us, in which our more serious feelings are no way involved,—this is the pure element of the comic. Wit again is the same contrast exhibited in abstract unfigured words, and not in those which suggest images of the senses. Drollery is mere incongruous combination, without any true antithesis between the thoughts. But the humorous admits of harsher shadows and more stately forms than any of these. And why is this? What is their use? Evidently that the grand and base may thus mutually relieve and heighten each other. And the stronger the opposition, the more effectual the humour: but this within the limit that, when the serious and noble is so excellent as to fill the whole heart with pity or with awe, we

loathe any inconsistent accompaniment; which only the most daring masters, at the peril of their heads, can then successfully introduce.

Now, from this it would follow that, in order to really humorous writing, a man must have a true and intuitive perception of the simply and eternally good and great in all the modes of human life. The eye for this will also be probably the quickest and surest in discerning what most contrasts with it,—the trivial and bombastic, the drivelling, squinting, sprawling clowneries of Nature, with all her worn out stage-properties and rag-fair emblazonments.

In Aristophanes such a power of insight served the purposes of the gayest, most graceful, and symmetrical fancy. With less abundance in the flood of imagery, and something finer and more celestial in the heart, it constituted the genius of Cervantes. Depress his habitual tone of joyousness, narrow and harden the man; and you produce Swift. Weaken again his will, and strengthen his animal impulses; and the result is Rabelais. Lighten the whole of much of its force, and leave the waters shallower by half, but make them also brighter and more delicate; and we figure to ourselves a Sterne. In the same way enrich the understanding, warm and expand the bosom, and add a tenfold force of nature; and you will laugh, and weep, and be lifted up in the presence of Jean Paul.

This view of humour makes it evident that the quality can belong only to those, in whom there is a strong and keen consciousness of whatever has genuine worth. It will be obvious then to ask, why all men of large and elevated souls are not remarkable for humour? And we might answer, that there is more or less of it in all such men. But in fact those whose powers are devoted to practical work, as generals or statesmen, and those whom Nature specially fits for such careers, look at things with reference only to the question,—What is to be done with them? How must they be handled? And it may be said that it is the aim of their lives to be practical humourists, by exhibiting the golden and triumphant side of life in their own persons and fortunes, and the failing and absurd one in those of their opponents. Thus the humour lies not in their words, but their history,—in which oftentimes destiny out-humours them, and with a puff of wind shifts and reverses the whole project of their existence; whereby, in proportion as they are lowered and reduced to nothing, the humour of the tale for a philosophic observer is heightened and becomes transcendent.

Philosophers again, and all scientific thinkers, are little likely to display much humour in their speech or actions: for they have not in general the perception of reality in the concrete, sufficiently vivid and eager to enable them to feel

the force of contrast between the highest objects and the lowest. Their work lies among thoughts, not things, or their images; and what would be humour in a poet appears in them as some hard and thin *reductio ad absurdum;* the absurd being, not the Olympian foolery of a Quixote or a Falstaff, but merely the logically inconsistent.

This account of humour being admitted, it becomes evident why the humorous lies so near, as often has been remarked, to the pathetic and sublime; how they pass into each other by perpetual undulations and successions, with a play and interfusion of vital energy from one to the other: so that the homely farce of a Rembrandt and a Bunyan, of a Hogarth and a Fielding, lies under and supports conceptions, of which the tenderness and lofty passion will never fade from human hearts.

It may be added, as a curious psychological fact, that we happen to have known a person, on whose veracity we could rely, and who stated that he had more than once, in the midst of scenes of general gaiety, been compelled to retire under the irresistible inclination to burst into tears. The same person had sometimes, on hearing of the severe affliction of others, a painful difficulty in refraining from laughter. This peculiarity he himself explained by a tendency, which was deeply grounded in his character, to feel

acutely the incongruities of the world, and to contemplate all things as the idle straws and bubbles in the eddies of that dark, swift stream.

However this may be, it is to be noted that a predominance of humour is hardly compatible with perfect harmony and proportion between the different powers in man. The thorough symmetry of soul, which seeks and creates the symmetrical everywhere, recoils from those sudden encounters of high and low. Comedy, which moves in a uniform element of the light and ludicrous, is appropriate even to the purest and most perfect imagination, as we find in Cervantes and Shakspere. But humour, which passes with no gradation from heart-wrung tears, from lordliest dignity, to the paltry and the futile,—this shocks, this embitters the high poet's serene completeness. Accordingly we find that, in all the men most peculiarly distinguished for humour, there is a strain in life, as well as thought, of the irregular and cyclopic; the farce of the imagination alternating with the vehemence of the heart. Nor can we deny that there is in Mr. Carlyle, as in Jean Paul, and more perhaps than in him, a share of tumultuous abruptness, and of gloomy spectral fervour, which increases the significancy of his works, while it removes them from the ideal of poetic roundness and delicacy.

We have now said much, too much for our readers, too little for the subject, on what seem

to us the chief peculiarities of a most memorable man. But any one who should take up the writings themselves with no other preconception than that which we have attempted to give him, would doubtless be startled at the strangeness of the style which prevails more or less throughout them. They are not careless, headlong, passionate, confused; but they bear a constant look of oddity, which seems at first mere wilful wantonness, and which we only afterwards find to be the discriminating stamp of original and strong feeling. This,—this feeling, rooted in profound susceptibility, and matured into a central vivifying power,—is, we should say, the author's most extraordinary distinction. For it is not the ostentatious, impetuous sentiment, which calls, a sufficient audience being by, on heaven and earth for sympathy, and would wish for that of Tartarus too, as an additional acknowledgement of its sublime sincerity. Here, on the contrary, the feeling is not what the man is proud of, and would fain exhibit. He shrinks from the profession, nay, from the sense of it; even painfully labours to trifle and be at ease, that he may hide from others, and may for himself forget, the thorny fagot-load of his own emotions. Yet make them known he must; for they are not those of some private personal grief or passion, from which he may escape into literature or science, and leave his pains and longings

behind him; but his sensibilities are burning with a slow immense fire, kindled by the very theme on which he writes, and compelling him to write. The greatness and weakness, the infinite hopes and unquenchable reality of human life,—the aching pressure of the body and its wants on the myriads of millions in whom celestial force sleeps and dreams of hell,—the sight of follies, frauds, cruelties, and lascivious luxury, in the midst of a race thus endowed and thus suffering, —and the unconquerable will and thought with which the few work out the highest calling of all men,—these it is, and not self-indulging distresses and theatrical aspirations of his own, which boil and storm within. Therefore does he speak with the solid strength and energy, which gives so serious and rugged an aspect to his sentences; while, perpetually checking himself, from a wise man's shame at excessive emotion, and from the knowledge that others will but half sympathize with him, he adds to his most weighty utterances a turn of irony, which relieves the excessive strain.

It must also be considered that, having looked piercingly and bravely into the doings of the world, and found much thereof false, and much more only half true, he is constantly led to speak of things either held in esteem or blandly tolerated, and to convey his knowledge of their worthlessness, in a tone of quiet, deliberate scorn,

which couples itself in friendly dissonance with his fervid worship of many a ragged, outcast heroism; as the answer of an Arab Sheik to the messenger of a Pasha requiring the free son of the desert to pay tribute, compared with his welcome to his tents of the naked, wandering stranger.

Add to this, that Mr. Carlyle's resolution to convey his meaning at all hazards makes him seize the most effectual and sudden words, in spite of usage and fashionable taste; and that therefore, when he can get a brighter tint, a more expressive form, by means of some strange, —we must call it,—Carlylism, English, Scotch, German, Greek, Latin, French, Technical, Slang, American, or Lunar, or altogether Superlunar, transcendental, and drawn from the eternal Nowhere,—he uses it with a courage which might blast an academy of lexicographers into a Hades void even of vocables.

We should infer from Mr. Carlyle's style that he is not naturally fluent, or at least had not been led in very early life, when alone perhaps it can be done, to use with smooth dexterity a conventional mechanism of discourse on all the topics known in civilized life. Where this, which may be called the rain-spout or parish-pump faculty, has been much developed, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to gain that short, sharp, instantaneous mode of expression, which

says what the speaker feels to be the right thing, and no more, and so leaves it. But if, from circumstances of any kind, whether of personal seclusion, or of silent and severe habits in those about us in childhood, this knack or gift has not been carried to any very awful perfection, such as one finds in barristers, preachers, literary journeymen, leaders of the House of Commons, auctioneers, and the like,—and if, nevertheless, there is real matter crowding and glowing for utterance, a man's speech is likely to have a pith and directness otherwise extremely hard of attainment, and which recals the reason given by old Gaunt in *Richard II.*, for the hope that his own dying counsels may influence the young king:

> Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain:
> For they breathe truth, that breathe their words in pain.

Furthermore it may be observed, on the choice of words shown in this author's writings, that his clear and irresistible eye for the substantial and significant in all objects, and his carelessness of the merely abstract, display themselves in an immediateness and prominence of expression, to which we see nothing in its kind equal in modern English books. His style is not so much a figured, as an embossed one. The shapes which it exhibits have not only neatness and strength, which those of a clever rhetorician often have, but a truth and life, which show them to be prompted by the

writer's feeling and experience of things, and not arranged from a calculation of what will be the effect on others.

Having said so much of what strikes us as most remarkable in Mr. Carlyle, it is time for us,—more than time,—to speak particularly of the contents of the books now before us. The bulkier of these is a collection of Essays, which have appeared in different English periodical works during the last ten or twelve years. We regard them as the most important series of papers that any one man has contributed to the present race of Reviews and Magazines,—nay, as incomparably the most so. About two-thirds of the whole relate to German literature, and of these the greater number to authors who, though all now departed, have been living in our own day.

Of these portraits none is so remarkable for its subject as that of Goethe, communicated in two articles, which contain various translated specimens from his works, but chiefly consist of descriptions of his character and life. It is not too much to say, that to these and other labours of the same hand is due almost all the just appreciation of Goethe now existing in England. A few, twenty years ago a very few, there doubtless were in this country, who understood that he was on the whole the most remarkable person of modern times. But for the widened and fast widening knowledge of this truth among all who

occupy themselves with literature, so that it is no longer a mere secret doctrine, but courts the sunshine and challenges opponents, the chief immediate cause must be found in the zeal with which it has been made known by Mr. Carlyle.

Surely the sight thus presented to us is a sufficiently surprising one. Imagine a man of the mould and aspect of Luther standing forth to proclaim the greatness and immortal beauty of a poet such as Shakspere. So dramatic, so symbolic is the contrast between the eulogized and the eulogist. They resemble each other indeed, as two truly great men, of self-coherent thoughts and lives, must needs be like: and both of them rise far above the common stature of man. The one how large of bone, how sturdy, and with a look of combat, and of high crusader enthusiasm! Yet this he readily exchanges for a broad, disdainful scorn of vermin that come nigh him, whom he treads down and brushes into inane abysses with a tyrannous gust of ridicule. This again in turn passes swiftly into bitter natural tears for the misery of those on whose behalf he has armed himself to battle. A man of thews and courage, such as seldom have been clothed in knightly mail, resembling perhaps a great Christianized giant of romance, a legendary Christopher,—so solid does he stand, so simple, blunt, and inartificial in his stride and bearing. One who in generous courtesy and trustful kind-

liness is of no less large a frame than in mere strength and exuberance of life. Then look at the man on whom he bends such reverential eyes; tall indeed, and full, and fixed, and so catching the eye, but far more detaining it by a refined dignity, and the perfect look of sculptured gracefulness, and yielding softer and higher music than ever was shed from the image of the divine Memnon over the Egyptian desert. In a word, with much in common, the distinguishing characteristic of the one is indomitable strength, that of the other unblemished symmetry.

The points in Goethe on which Mr. Carlyle emphatically dwells, are his conscientious laboriousness, his unbounded tolerance, arising from his universal comprehensiveness, and, lastly, his reverence, not formal but vital, for the truth and love on which the universe is based, and which are the highest manifestations of the life that pervades it.

The first of these qualities, his manifold and ceaseless industry, used and perfected to the end, through a life of more than eighty years, is doubtless an example to be held in remembrance,—a historic thing. There has been however many a mere man of learning who has probably worked as incessantly. It is Goethe's distinction in this respect, that, with a soul open to the varied joys of life, and allured by flattering circumstances, he yet toiled on systematically for the

highest ends, in the pursuit of which a man must proceed, if at all, with the purest freedom, as if he had been plodding in the meanest routine which permits and almost requires the mechanization of the mind. The friendly tolerance, springing from cheerful sympathies and the clearest, least prejudiced of understandings, is a merit of a far more uncommon kind; for seldom has there been a man capable of apprehending truth, and of engaging in the higher tasks of thought, to whom it has been given to recognise all modes and tints of worth in all human beings, however inconsistent with the speculative system which the mere intellect had adopted. But that this was a special and most highly cultivated endowment of Goethe's, is plain to any one who reads his works; yet under this limitation, that, as his own philosophic preconceptions never obscured his sense of excellence, or even of much more vulgar merit, when he found it realized in life, those in whom such dogmatic positiveness is predominant, and suppresses, or tends to suppress, the candid openness to human facts, were those to whom he least spontaneously did justice. When this devotion to an abstract ideal was stirred and inflamed into zealous action, as in great religious reformers, then least of all did Goethe expand his heart to admit the claims of the ethical hero, though his understanding was always far too clear-sighted not to acknowledge

the importance of such men in the history of the world. Lastly, in Goethe's veneration for a Highest above him, Mr. Carlyle has found a religious music, the fit accompaniment of his own noblest hopes and convictions. In Goethe this consciousness of an Infinite Perfection, which man's best faculties can but faintly discern, and his fairest creations but narrowly figure, seems to us to have been ever present and awake. Its pulsations may, we think, be felt, its animating and purifying breath inhaled through all his works, though often so inseparably combined with the whole structure that one cannot extract it from this page or that, and say,—Lo! here, or Lo! there. But if thus living throughout his writings, as the spring-time moves in every air and leaf of the green landscape, this piety of imagination cannot have been wanting to his character and life. Yet it must be added, that there is but a small portion of the poet's works in which this feeling is manifested in the form of distinct opinion. And, though he was always probably quite capable of appreciating its value in others, it was by no means one of the excellences in man, which he in general held requisite in order to obtain his respect and sympathy.

Who can doubt that Goethe would at any time have preferred the society of a flippant, smooth, *dilettante* Horace Walpole, to that of a stern, pro-

phetic, ignorant Whitfield? Who does not see that Mr. Carlyle would have fixed his eye upon the letter-writing *virtuoso* with hardly more of interest than on a fashionable vender of antique curiosities? and would have owned the man of gloom and glare, the songless rhapsodist, as a true brother, not a man of quality, but a man?

Goethe, in his notes to Benvenuto Cellini, has spoken with high eulogy of Lorenzo de' Medici, and with contemptuous dislike of Savonarola. This man, as those know who have carefully read the documents on his character, was a most sincere and fervid Roman Catholic Puritan, and was held in veneration during his life, and long after his death, by at least half the most eminent and best of his Florentine contemporaries, and by innumerable others. Of his chief admirers may be named Philip de Comines and Michael Angelo. Now there is little boldness in conjecturing that Mr. Carlyle would consider Lorenzo worthless or worse, and would feel for the reforming monk an admiration akin to that with which he regards John Knox and Martin Luther.

The glory however remains, and must always remain, for Mr. Carlyle, of having been the first to inform that half of the civilized world whose speech is English, that Goethe is the man to whom, for fullness joined to fineness of nature,

at once for capacity and accomplishment, no other of our age can be compared. Nay, the best among them, whom the others must ultimately, however unwillingly, obey, have through him been so informed of, or rather by, this truth, that it rests for them in the main on its just and unalterable grounds. All the knowledge of Goethe which may be added, must cohere with that which he has given, and depend upon it, like the bartizans, bridges, court-yards, turrets, and encircling walls, with the immovable gothic keep, which is the ancestral stronghold of the great castle. Others in England before him undoubtedly knew the truth on this subject, and some had published it: but no one in such a way as to force it on the attention of all who read miscellaneous literature, and to induce multitudes, especially of younger men, to acquaint themselves with the writings of the greatest man of our time.

When it is said that Goethe was this, how much is in the words implied! No less than that it is he who has seen widest and deepest into the wants and powers of his age, and has best shown what may be done in it, by those who must in the end be the teachers of the others. That he was a much greater man than had been in Europe for several generations, may or may not arise simply from the fact, that the age itself was generally a far more complex and

more energetic one than those which had immediately preceded. Of his place in it there is likely to be less and less of doubt. Whatever else may be written about him in English, which will hardly surpass in interest what we have before us, these are at least the first at all ample notices, which, when Goethe had been for about half a century established by his works as the first mind in Europe, made Englishmen aware of the fact. Grasshoppers had before chirped for and against the rumoured foreign singer; and these are often pleasant verdant animals. But now it was no grasshopper; the creature is of a different race. *Bos locutus est.* It was the roaring of a bull*, which the mountains needs must hear and reply to. The Divine Monster, renewing the Europan tale, carried on his back, as he rode the waters, the unreluctant Muse of Germany.

It need hardly be said, that, neither on the subject of Goethe, nor on almost any other, do we profess, or inwardly yield, unconditional assent to Mr. Carlyle. In many things he seems to us hyperbolical and inordinate; in many negligent of counter-considerations. Seeing clearly which scale descends, so zealous is he to recognise the fact for himself, and enforce it on others, that he overlooks the existence of any weight at all,—and often there is a heavy one,—on the other side of

* *Roaring bulls* he would him make to tame.—*Spenser.*

the balance. With reference to Goethe, there is a droll example of what we may venture to call partisanship, which is amusingly unlike the writer's general and most religious accuracy of statement.

Mr. Carlyle's *Essays* contain one on Count Cagliostro, in which, through a surface of much emblematic and arabesque design, the whole reality of the magician, and of his place in the universe,—a region ultimately, however slowly, fatal to quacks,—may plainly be discovered. In this biography Herr von Goethe is presented to us as a traveller at Palermo, the city which Count Cagliostro honoured by being born there. Goethe, visiting it in the course of his Italian journey, in April, 1787, desired, as he informs us, to see the nearest relatives of so illustrious a thaumaturgist. Mr. Carlyle proceeds to translate several pages in which the Poet relates the particulars of his visit, and the imaginative assertions (ready as those of that other famous voyager to Sicily, Ulysses) by virtue (?) of which he introduced himself, and accounted for his appearance there, such as his acquaintance with Cagliostro, and the like. In the course of conversation it appears, that Cagliostro had left at Palermo, not only an unsavory renown, but a debt of fourteen gold ounces,—we presume doubloons,—due to a poor widowed sister, who tells Goethe the fact. Mr. Carlyle ends his account

of the matter with this sentence: "As for the Signora Capitummino, with her three fatherless children, we can believe, at least, that the fourteen gold ounces were paid by a sure hand, and so her heavy burden for some space lightened a little."

Fourteen doubloons amount, as we reckon, to about 50*l.* And the English author seems to say, that Goethe paid this money in Cagliostro's name. Now in the last edition of Goethe's works we find, at vol. 28, p. 146, these two paragraphs immediately following the last words translated by the biographer of Cagliostro:

I need not say that the interest which I took in this family excited in me a lively wish to be of use to them, and to assist them in their necessity. Through my means they were now again deceived; and their hopes of an unexpected help were, by the curiosity of northern Europe, in the way to be a second time disappointed.

My first design was to present to them, before my departure, those fourteen ounces which the runaway had remained indebted to them, and to conceal my gift under the pretext that I hoped to obtain the sum again from him. But when I made my calculation at home, and took account of my cash and paper, I saw clearly that, in a country where from want of communication distances grow to be almost infinite, I should place myself in difficulty, if I took upon me to remedy, by a piece of cordial good-nature, the dishonesty of a scoundrel.

This comparison of the impression in Mr. Carlyle's mind with that on bookseller Cotta's paper, from which the former professes to have

been derived, suggests to us, with new satisfaction, a passage of the same author, which his great English interpreter has also somewhere quoted. (*Tag und Jahres Hefte, Werke*, xxxii., p. 63.) Goethe here speaks of himself as "inmostly convinced that man in the present, and still more in his recollection, shapes and models the outward world according to his own peculiarities."

The other dissertations on German literature are all of high value, and show an amount of care and sincerity, which may be regarded as quite exemplary for such papers. Those on Schiller, Jean Paul, and Novalis, are portraits at full length, and living as if done by Rubens. But of these productions we cannot now speak in detail. There are two essays on Frenchmen of the 18th century,—Voltaire and Diderot,—which are also masterpieces of free, strong, and just delineation.

The account of Voltaire especially may, both for the importance of the hero (of the narrative), and for the vigour and solidity of the composition, be considered as a work in this kind which will outlast the Plymouth breakwater and the New Houses of Parliament. It is a singular illustration of the writer's character. We have in Voltaire a combination of all the qualities in almost the highest degree, which his critic most unconditionally defies and spits at,—levity, logic,

conventional culture, and decorousness, pecuniary prosperity, sneering indifference. Hardly could any one imagine anything, except the hard, insolent brutality of a powerful fool, or the sleek and lying gravity of a worldly priest, which would more jar on Mr. Carlyle's feelings and faith, than the fortunes, combined with the propensities, of Voltaire. He had all that there is in Goethe, which contrasts so curiously with the character of Goethe's chief English admirer. And he wanted that most pure and bright imagination, which made Goethe so felicitous an interpreter of all the symbols that embody truth, and which is his chief intellectual claim to admiration and love. Yet so searching and expansive is the Englishman's understanding of all genuine talents and endeavours, such his sense of justice, and his power of doing justice, that he sets before us an image of the French wit, fully as remarkable for the candid kindliness of the artist, as for the eminence of his subject.

Odd concurrence, and perhaps peculiar to our time; when the grave, religious anchorite issues from the primeval ruins and palm-groves where he has made his hermitage, and, visiting the court of a Sultan, looks at and quietly appreciates the dancing, juggling jester and *improvisatore*, whom the crowd applaud, and neither condemns their levity, nor suggests the propriety of impaling him. New spectacle in our moral annals, when

an Augustine,—fiery and immeasurable as that Hannibal who sprang from the same soil, and in a world wider and higher than Hannibal's as Heaven than Earth,—contemplates a ribald tearless Lucian, not as a fiendish reptile to be crushed, but as an erring man who worked with such means as he had in such dreary work as lay before him, and is to be understood, pitied, pardoned, not plunged into an inextinguishable flame-bath of abhorrence.

In this essay on Voltaire, as we have referred to it at all, it may be worth while to notice that we find a favourite doctrine of Mr. Carlyle's put forward in these words: "The thinking and the moral nature, distinguished by the necessities of speech, have no such distinction in themselves, but, rightly examined, exhibit in every case the strictest sympathy and correspondence, are indeed but different phases of the same indissoluble unity, —a living mind."

Now in this and all similar statements of the author, it has always seemed to us that he neither does justice to himself nor to his readers. He is haunted apparently by some ghost of a theory, which fills him with just antipathy,—that the faculties of a man are lifeless, separable things, put together like differently coloured bits of wood in a joiner's inlaid work, so that the chess-player is constructed by a higher effort of the same kind of skill employed in constructing his chess-table:

which, could man do nothing better than play chess, might have a show of some meaning. But to love and make love while playing chess, like Ferdinand and Miranda, or to philosophize over his game, like Nathan the Wise,—this passes the craft of any timber-and-toy-work ever imagined before or since the days of Hiram of Tyre. This notion, that juxtaposition of dead parts, not conspiration of living powers, is the secret of our being, which is taught by several thinkers, or, omitting the aspirate, tinkers, in psychology, Mr. Carlyle opposes, often with victorious derision and divine feeling, but often also, as it seems, by all manner of random and amorphous assertions, which, like bursting cannon and reverting Congreve-rockets, injure his own cause at least as much as that which he combats. As if a wise man could find no other way of putting aside a fool's wooden buckler, but by running full tilt against it with his own head, in which concussion the philosophic skull is not the implement that of the two will be the least damaged.

In this passage, let us ask, what is the value of the assertion that *there is no distinction in themselves between the thinking and the moral nature?* Mr. Carlyle has shown abundantly well that Voltaire was not the greatest of men as a practical, that is, a moral being. Therefore, he says, neither can he have been the greatest of thinkers. The reasoning is perfectly just, because, as no one doubts, the same

thinking faculty will think better when combined with a good moral nature than with a bad one. Therefore any man who has been as acute and intellectually susceptible as Voltaire, and has also had a stronger and more religious conscience, must have been a wiser and farther-seeing man. And as there is no ground, even independently of experience, for doubting the possibility of this better example of manhood, it is of course likely that Voltaire was not the best of thinkers. It is matter of fact that there have been both better intellects and nobler hearts than his, sometimes separate, and sometimes united, forming in the last case the highest class of human beings we know,—Socrates, for instance, and Shakspere.

But after the statement that, because Voltaire was not the best, therefore he was not the wisest of men,—a sacred truth,—what is the reason given for it? Because *the thinking and the moral nature are but different phases of the same indissoluble unity,—a living mind.* But we suppose it must equally be allowed that memory and fancy are also but *different phases*, &c. Therefore all the persons of well-nigh miraculous memory, who could repeat the Bible by rote and so forth, have been also the most brilliant speakers and writers. So sympathetic sensibility and the talent for number and geometry are but *different phases of the same indissoluble unity.* Therefore Howard and Wilberforce were mathematicians equal to

Lagrange and Laplace; and Newton was demonstrably a man of the warmest and liveliest affections.

Mr. Carlyle's mode of stating his opinion must therefore, as it seems, be abandoned. But to refute him is far less important than to understand him,—to know what his essential meaning is, and what is its value.

According to the popular opinion, he is evidently altogether wrong; for it is vulgarly held that there is no connection whatever between the amount and liveliness of the intellect, and the worth of the heart and conscience. The highest power of insight and creation are perpetually attributed in common talk to persons, of whom it is supposed that they are entirely destitute of all sense of duty. This notion Mr. Carlyle sees to be a gross blunder, and one the correction of which is important, not only that we may better estimate the persons in whom there is alleged to be this mixture of light and darkness, but that we may apprehend more clearly the whole relation of goodness to greatness in those in whom they are admitted to have been combined, and may rectify all our habitual conceptions of the groundwork of human life.

The truth may perhaps be this. No man can be a great poet or philosopher, without having in his own mind a large share of what is best in man. If it does not exist in his life, it cannot become

known to his intelligence. If not known it cannot be represented in his image of the world, which will consequently be a mean and scanty one. So far the old maxim holds: *quantum sumus scimus.* The greatest of mankind are those in whom there is the combination of what is morally best, of love and will, with luminous intelligence. But these may be mixed in endless varieties of proportion among the whole mass of men below the highest. Nay, if one reads a few columns of police reports and trials, one is tempted to fancy that the majority of mankind may be divided into the two classes of clever scoundrels, and the well-intentioned simpletons whom they dupe. Mr. Carlyle would hardly deny that there is many a peasant, such say as the fathers of Burns and of Luther, in whom dwells a far higher and more sacred sense of obligation and of reverence than in Voltaire, yet for whom it would be ridiculous to claim such talents as he possessed. In severity and persistency of conscientiousness, how far does a dogged Mr. Newton of Olney, a dull Mr. Scott of Aston-Sanford, stand above a Gibbon and a Hume! In knowledge, clearness, thoughtfulness, how much farther below them! Or compare a Colonel Gardiner, a Colonel Hutchinson, with a Frederick II., with a Duke of Guise,—a Man of Ross with a Lord Bolingbroke,—a missionary Swartz with an un-missionary Lord Clive or Hyder Ali,—a Mr. Calamy with

a Dr. South,—a Savonarola with an Erasmus,—a Jeanie Deans with a Madame de Sévigné,—and then admire the attempt to identify conscience and understanding, head and heart!

In fact, so far as common observation reaches, in physical science, in practical business, in eloquence, conversational, forensic, or senatorial, there may be almost any force of understanding and volition, without faith, affectionateness, duteousness, truth. Witness so many a coarse and brutal mathematician and naturalist,—so many an utterly profane and reprobate statesman,—witness a Wolsey, an Ezzelino, a Tiberius, a Richelieu. Nay, it may be said, that no mean reach of anthropological theory, of insight into man, so far as he is a selfish and instinctive, not a generous and rational being, may be found in persons themselves of the poorest, shallowest character; as in how many a tricky Jesuit, how many a French philosopher of the 18th century; as in a Lucian, a Lord Chesterfield, a Père Joseph, a Talleyrand, and alas! a Machiavelli and a Bacon.

It is easy for any one who has studied Mr. Carlyle's writings, to imagine with what huge disdain and aloofness he would listen to trivialities of this kind, and make it apparent with a kind of articulate rhinoceros grunt, that he had taken such cases into his account, and weighed them better than his critic. So be it. We at least

have no doubt that he has seen more clearly than most, perhaps than all other, living men, the impossibility of apprehending the highest principles of things, without having in our own breasts a noble model and ideal of man,—that is to say, without having before our eyes the highest form of the highest being we know. But his zeal in setting forth this great truth seems perpetually to carry him headlong, before he has cleared his way, into a jungle of expressions where his own progress is impeded, and his weaker followers attempting to track him may very possibly be altogether bewildered.

The most usual expedient for making out his case is to say merely that all intelligence, except that which requires goodness,—intelligence not lighted by and looking to what is most divine in man,—is not intelligence at all. Consequently he adopts a vocabulary of his own, for what most men would call understanding of some kind,—such as adroitness, logic, and so forth. For some resource must be found to avoid calling by the name of intellect a mental faculty, which has often nevertheless made the possessor the king of millions of minds. Yet there is no obvious absurdity in suggesting that it is this same hard mechanical understanding, which, when combined with a free, large, resolute, and glowing heart, makes the man of men, the king, not of one, but of all ages. On the other hand, who has not

known some poor dark dreamer, full of celestial faith and courage and humble beneficence, to whom if you could but give the talent of a Rochester, you would have a Fénélon,—the wit of a Lady Mary Wortley Montague, and you would produce a Madame Roland?

Mr. Carlyle, in order to make some of his favourite personages square with his theory, seems to us to do more than use words in new senses. Thus he rates Dr. Johnson's abilities far higher than any one else would, who holds the same extensive and energetic views as to literature and science. And this because Johnson, though as far as a prodigiously clever man well can be from either poetry or philosophy, was an indubitably noble champion of integrity and manhood. And so of Mirabeau on the other hand, whose talents it would be ludicrous to deny, his great panegyrist maintains a moral theory, in which probably not one earnest and reverential mind in Europe would agree. For the problem of this much debated lamentable man does in truth seem of no difficult solution. He stands before us on the whole free from inward or outward disguises, —a mass of flagrant energies, in brain, limbs, and appetite, without law or wisdom of any kind,— but driven through the indulgence of all maddest impulses into the worst of meanness and filth; a man, in a word, with a Self more requiring to be commanded than that of any one else in his

day, and yet than whom not one was less capable of Self-command. Often did he stirringly uncommon deeds, sometimes perhaps a splendidly impetuous and effective one, most frequently mere clever tricks for self-advancement, not seldom acts of intemperance, which the thinnest film of self-respect would have rendered impossible on any temptation. But for the Revolution, he would probably, and not unrighteously, have ended his career in the galleys, to which he was rapidly hastening. The sound of this great commotion he heard with the same joy as a pirate in chains in the hold of a vessel, when he catches the bellowing of the storm, and hears the timbers creak, and the spars falling; for now there is a chance that he may be let loose, and even called on to aid in saving all the rest; otherwise he has nothing to hope but the gallows. In the wreck of that doomed and worthless French government, he showed himself, with a self-conscious daring, cool swiftness, and tremendous volubility, which made him for a time the grandest lord of misrule that modern Europe ever saw. But in spite of the opinion of Mr. Carlyle, which was also, we believe, that of Niebuhr, it seems inconceivable that he, or even a man with all his gifts and none of his shame,—even a Hercules without the poisoned shirt,—could have solved such a problem as that of saying when the Revolution was to stop. For stop it could not at any point short of the

utter disgust and weariness of the people at a blood-stained, fiend-possessed anarchy, which, in order to abhor, they must first have experienced. Finally therefore Mirabeau stands in history with a head of diamond, nerves of iron, and a mouth of gold, and one whose furnace of a soul contained far more of clay and dross and fetid rottenness than of any purer, manlier material.

This view of the distinction between head and heart, wit and will, no doubt is common-place and hackneyed; but so are Euclid and the Almanac.

There is but one other of these biographical representations which we propose to speak of. It is that of Samuel Johnson. Of few men named in English literature has more been said and written. His works are known more or less to all Englishmen who read; and there is a still more substantial record of him in Boswell's Life than in his own writings. On these materials innumerable artisans have been at work. For fifty years he has been a perpetual theme of journalists. He is still a sort of venerable name, as of something bigger and more sonorous than other authors of the eighteenth century, not without a shadow of romance,—a something between the Parish Schoolmaster and the Great Mogul. For a considerable time after his death he passed, even among cultivated men, for a profound thinker, a teacher of the principles of human life, and the best of authorities in literary

criticism; while, as to his rhetorical ability, the only question seemed to be whether he was great, —almost incomparably great,—by dint of, or in spite of, his style. Of late years the tide has turned. The habit has grown up of looking wider and deeper in literature, than was usual in his day. Men require freedom, energy, picturesqueness, subtlety, even at the cost of a certain neatness and full-dress modishness, then thought indispensable. We have come nearer to reality in all ways, and find therefore that we must widen our circle of mental activity, as the horizon of nature spreads endlessly around us. Thus the common estimate of Johnson has changed; and younger, fresher gods have drawn off men's attention from the Jove, whose shake of his un-ambrosial wig once ruled the world. A prejudiced, emphatic pedant,—is probably the sort of description which would most nearly hit the prevalent opinion about him during the last twenty years. Nor has the teaching of men of high talent been wanting recently to enforce this view of his pretensions. But listen to Mr. Carlyle's voice. The scene changes with a flash; and Johnson stands before us, revealed in gigantic size, an object for all ages of reverential love.

By what magic is this done? Nay, it is not by magic, but by that art, of which magic, were there such a secret in existence, would be a subordinate handicraft department. With an

eye, one of the rarest ever given to man, and sharpened by stedfast use, he sees the essential, the intrinsic in other men, and, while he sees it, reads it aloud in a tone which all must hear.

What he tells us of in Johnson is not the theories, the prejudices, the style of the man. It is the man himself; what he had the capacity to be; above all, what he willed to be, and how resolutely. Thus we see the rough, sorrowful, over-violent, voracious, unrefined man start out as a hero, a worn, unwearied wrestler for conscience-sake, whose life was the grand work, to which all his written works are but an appendix and *pièces justificatives*. It is not that he says this, as it is here said, or as any one might say it, in abstract terms, which convey the meaning only as a black profile represents the face,—hardly so well: for in this the outline is the fac-simile of a part of the original; but abstract terms express only a general notion, which belongs equally to ten thousand originals, and can therefore accurately image no one of them specially. But Mr. Carlyle so says the thing, as to startle the eye with it and stamp it on the heart. For him who has read his account of Johnson, the old grey, scarred, passionate, but purely good man is for ever a living being, one whom we have heard with profit, gazed at with veneration, nay, whom we have known as those did not know him, at whose tables he sat, and to whose questions he

replied. We know him both by faith and insight, inwardly and in his structure, and as a toiling mortal man in this painful land of the Immortal.

Thus in that flat and meagre English eighteenth century, which produced the houses, the furniture, the thoughts, the people, that we are most accustomed to consider decayed and out of date, human life comes before us in one great, awkward image, still a sacred beaming reality. There is no well-known biography of any man written by one who knew him intimately, which sets him so livingly before us in all his breadth and strength, in what was peculiar to him, and not his accidental fringes and appendages, and with all that was truly shaping and influencing in his age and circumstances, as this delineation of Johnson by a man who never saw him in the body,—knew him not till he had been removed from the stage and stage-lamps of the present, to live before the spiritual eye among the starry depths of heaven.

In this singular essay it may be remarked, and well deserves to be thought of, that Mr. Carlyle never appears to have been forcibly struck by the sad unrest, the entire absence of peace in Johnson's whole life. As fixed by his moral strength as the hardest material framework of the earth, and freely standing fast against all temptation, supported also by an unwavering belief in a Divine Friend of man ruling the universe, yet was he always anxious and spectre-haunted.

Though too stout of heart for legions of fiends to drag him into their pit of darkness, yet he always fancied that He, against whom all fiends are in revolt, would thrust him from his presence over the brink of destruction.

Nor did this arise directly from a thoroughly diseased physical frame infecting a healthy mind; which would perhaps be the commonest solution. For Johnson's view of all beyond the mechanical and palpable had in itself the seeds of all the moral misery which he suffered. The mere moral element, the conscience, was in him nobly, but also fearfully predominant. By earnest longing to fulfil the moral law did no man, from Adam to the Baptist, from Paul to Luther, ever yet find peace on earth. Those incapable of self-devouring emotion and brooding melancholy may easily find in rules of duty a safeguard against any such wrong-doing, as would produce consequences very painful to them; but a fervid and meditative spirit carries conscience with it as a divine curse, if this be not transfigured and glorified into the revelation of a good higher than all laws of duty.

The philosopher has his insight into an ideal self-subsistent first principle, the source and end of all things. The regenerate religious believer enjoys communion with an unseen, ever-present Deity. The poet and poetic artist cultivates his general consciousness of an eternal harmony and beauty pervading all objects, and lending them

whatever they enjoy of worth. These are realities of life, in subordination to which the agonizing conscience is reconciled with the universe, and so lights up the soul, without consuming it to the ashes of sorrow.

Now in Johnson this higher consciousness never took complete effect. It worked indeed negatively and destructively towards the overthrow of all joy, rather than genially towards the realization of a sacred and mysterious peace. Not refreshings were his, but witherings from the face of God. For him the grave was an ultimate den of horrors, not a crypt through which we rise into the bright, eternal temple. In all beyond the material and prudential, his theoretic insight was most dim and weak,—a purblind dream of insight. And thus he endeavoured to find a home for his reason in that region of the traditional and authoritative, which is even at best a road to travel on, a mine to work in,—but can for no mortal be a place of final rest.

That Mr. Carlyle does not notice in Johnson this absence of serene joy,—how different from the vain self-satisfaction of the world!—is an evidence of his characteristic tendency to sympathize with every struggle, and turn away from the fruits of every victory. His applause is never for him that putteth off his armour, but always for him that putteth it on. And the most resolute and mighty preacher in our day, of a Truth

to be believed and enjoyed by all, is he who seems least capable of valuing the repose of spirit, the quieting of inward tumults and terrors, which the courage to fight as he fights has earned for so many weaker men.

The want of capacity for the higher kinds of thought gives, as has been often felt, a peculiar hardness, deadness, and inane pomp to Johnson's writings. And his panegyrist's disposition to look chiefly at the practical vigour of a man's life, rather than at the quality of his intellect, is well illustrated by the fact, that he almost brings himself to attribute a positive and lasting value to these loud and swollen productions. Nay, in one of these essays, though not in that on Johnson, he has distinctly praised the preface to Shakspere, of which it might seem in our day hard to imagine how, being written by a sane and grammatical man, it could well be worse than it is. May we not, for instance, ruminate with a kind of languid, despairing amazement on the opinion that Shakspere is blamable for writing without any moral purpose, and "is not always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked,"— and so forth, through a series of ponderous futilities, which remind one of nothing more profitable than a mesh of cobwebs stiffened and vamped into buckram. With his gross and heavy logical faculty, and nothing more, with at least an utter want of transparent depth of imagination, what

could Johnson say of poetry, that should be worth listening to? Or how can we marvel that he flounders among words and crotchets as in a slough, when plunging with tusked muzzle and pachydermatous bulk, into a region where only enchanted arms, the shield of diamond and the sword of sunbeams, can avail the destined knight? As some great earth-monster, Johnson tunnels under ground, and heaves out rocks and tons of soil before him. But to move in air, and beyond the stars, a man must fly, not mine; and only by such digging faculty did Samuel ever show any intellectual prowess. Coleridge has somewhere spoken of him as the overrated man of his age, feeling, as might be expected, the hacking coarseness of that material understanding when applied to spiritual objects. Carlyle has shown clearly enough that the man was not overrated, but on the whole prodigiously undervalued. Though able to discern, had he so chosen, much of that defectiveness and rudeness of brain which repelled Coleridge, he deals tenderly with the most confounding pieces of (un-) philosophic botching, and flaring, noisy, sham solutions, in honour of the integrity and sturdiness of the clumsy Centaur's life and effort.

Thus much be said of the accounts of eminent men, which form so large a portion of these volumes. Of general dissertations not professedly biographical, there are only two considerable

essays. One of these, on the *Signs of the Times*, is a proclamation, in Mr. Carlyle's most express manner, of the mechanical tendencies and enthralment of our age. He sees freedom of heart, pure enthusiasm, self-forgetting personal nobleness of all kinds, fled, as it seems to him, from the world. Therefore he stands a mourning, too painfully living man amid a people of corpses, and artificial composite imitations of the old heroic race,—an inspired one, wailing to the winds of heaven, and the all-entombing mountains, because no human ear is open to him. But clear, swift, far-sounding as a torrent, his words spread forth, and will stream into many hearts. The heavy lamentation will come as a voice of hope to those who feel it the worst of evils that there is no one to lament with them; and in earnest sorrow they will find a stir to action, and a dawning breath of joy. Amid the clamorous snarl and gossip of literature, and the dead formulas of superficial science, here sounds a true prophetic voice, which the best of the dead might throb to hear. Nor will it be without fit audience among us, who, for want of living prophets to slay, have only tried to abolish the memory of the old ones, save as pageant figures for adorning shrines which they would have called down lightning to devour.

The second paper of which we spoke is entitled *Characteristics*. Of this it is far more difficult to say any reasonable word. In the details and

colouring it is full of Mr. Carlyle's spirit. But as a whole, and in its purport, it seems to us (that is, to one living man) obscure, self-contradictory, strained, like the long far-glimmering dream of some wise vision, that has been in other ages, or shall in new ages be. This is not said dogmatically, but with full consciousness that the fault may be in the reader, not the writer. For to no reflecting man can it be unknown, that the not-understood will often, most often, present itself as the unintelligible, by no defect of light in the object, but by defect of eye in the beholder. It is a droll, yet a compassionable fancy of many, that what is called ordinary education, that is to say, a small smattering of Latin, and a large smattering of English vocables, enables every one, or all but every one, to know at a glance what significance and worth there is in all the uttered speculations of the wisest heads. It is therefore indubitable that Mr. Carlyle may have an idea, which, if it could be imparted to the perplexed mind, would enable it to see in this dissertation a complete and consistent view of the high matters there dealt with. As the case now stands, it appears confused, and dark, not with excess of light. Yet the obscure looks nowise inscrutable, but having its explanation in some fallacies most natural and seductive to a man like him with whose works we are now occupied. Would you have a pine-forest teeming and arcadian as an

orchard? An idle question! Or the inside of a pyramid light and sunny as a greenhouse? How vain an expectation! Leave we such fancies; and make the best of what we have.

The main argument of the whole exposition is the evil of consciousness; which indeed is with Mr. Carlyle the root of all evil. It is not that in his view, as in that of all wise men, consciousness is liable to its excesses and derangements, but that the fact is itself a mischief and misery to man, and our only wholesome state that in which we work instinctively and spontaneously, not voluntarily and reflectively.

In this doctrine all the confusion seems explicable on the supposition that consciousness is used in a vague, unsteady sense, for the thing itself, and for all the maladies to which it is liable, and the sorrows and absurdities which these produce; as if a man should call digestion the great standing grievance of the human body, meaning thereby indigestion. Mr. Carlyle seems to conceive a mature man, with cultivated powers of thought, and reasonable, free activity, in whom consciousness has never been developed,—a sort of monster that earth never knew, and which will probably not exist in Heaven.

There is of course a truth in this theory; or it could not be a theory, but words without meaning. There is an important truth; or it would hardly be the opinion of him who professes it. But the

truth is in this essay connected with what seems as large a mass of error as can easily be met with in a great and generous thinker: and it is lost in such a bundle of exaggerations and paralogisms, that he may count himself happy, who by long metallurgic toil can make any gain of it at all.

The truth involved in the doctrine appears to be, that the mind which is perpetually looking at and listening to its own individuality, its private and particular associations, tastes, talents, and history, is wasting and corrupting its capacities, reducing itself to worthlessness, perpetually rehearsing the same paltry drama before the same beggarly audience. Let so much be granted, nay, zealously maintained.

But Mr. Carlyle lumps under the same condemnation all introspection of a man's being, not only in its individuality, as the being of Thomas Carlyle, or Bubb Doddington, or Honoré Gabriel Riquetti Mirabeau, or William Wilberforce,—but so far as it is the exemplar, and the only one that he can primarily study, of the being of all other men. My consciousness is the window, the only possible one, through which I look at the universe. My individuality is the looking-glass,—always a small, often a cracked and dim one, that hangs on the inner wall of the same chamber. I may hardly open my eyes at all, which is the case with the greater number of mankind. Or I may look through the window,—which brightens and en-

larges itself during the process,—and so see whatever it has been appointed for me to look at, as the greatest and best of men have always done. Or I may turn my back on the window, and gaze only at as much of the prospect as is reflected in the mirror, which is the proceeding of coxcombs and quacks. In the confounding of these last two very different mental acts, lies, as we conceive, the main error of the essay.

The habit of contemplating the particular monad, self, for its own sake, is a mere self-seeking, which divides us from other beings. Self-intuition and self-interpretation, when the self is regarded as a product of higher forces, similar to the other, and especially to the human, products of the same, is indispensable to all true knowledge of man and men, and even of all other things, in that chief sense in which their essence is a reality analogous to us. The exploring of myself in this higher view is not a nourishing, but a correcting, of vanity. Self is thus resolved into a result, an exponent, of laws, which it depends on, not commands,—is valued for the sake of that which is above it,—is dis-individualized, unisolated, rather universalized and idealized. To deal with these two opposite, and in truth irreconcilable processes of the soul, as if they were one, or at least inseparable, is no trifling departure from wisdom.

But there also seems to be a subordinate

mistake, a cub-chimera accompanying the dam thereof,—namely, the supposition that the most thoughtful and creative of men have not a consciousness of their own particular characters and powers. That act by which they are and have become great,—the clear discernment of the microcosmical self, and the esteem for it only as the type of all,—excludes, during its continuance, the thought of the atomic self in its private and accidental features and drapery. But the light which has been thus gained and spread over the universe, illuminates also the twig and cobweb nearest us. The sunrise which enables me to see the wide landscape through the window, no less permits me, when I am weary of meditative enthusiasm, to see my own visage in the mirror, and smile at the wrinkles and the paleness with which I have confronted so fresh and glowing a natural vision.

Accordingly the fact appears to be, that,—except in rude primitive ages, when greatness could only be spontaneous, not voluntary, instinctive, not reflective—every great man knows what he is,—knows it so well and habitually that he never needs to spend his time in affected sentimental speculations on himself. A few flashing looks into his own story, and the meditated experience of life, give such a man a consciousness which he cannot lose if he would, and would not if he could, of all that he is as an individual time-

bubble. But far differently is this knowledge won and employed from the ignorant self-admiration of the fop, wasting his life in the worship of an idol, which, like an altar-piece ruined by the smoke of the tapers, becomes the more worthless the longer and more fervently it is honoured.

The reasons by which Mr. Carlyle maintains his views are chiefly these:

1. In health we are insensible of our bodily functions; and the fact of our having a body at all is recalled to us only by pain, which is the result of disturbance or sickness: therefore, judging by analogy, the same is true of the mind.

But the fact asserted is only partly real. We are conscious of our bodies by means of their pleasures, as well as of their pains. Moreover the statement is nothing to the purpose. The bodily sensations are totally unlike in kind to the reflective self-consciousness. The true analogy to this, drawn from the body, is the knowledge of his organs and functions, which a physiologist acquires by self-observation, and which, so far as it is possible, is by no means incompatible with health. Doubtless, when the body becomes as it were the centre of the man's consciousness, when pain compels the energies of the soul to spend themselves on the sense of misery in the physical frame, this is a consequence of disease, and that in a violent degree. But the evil here is, that the supremacy of the mind is thus suspended

by the intrusion of sensations, which, in the sane and normal state of man, are the servants, not the masters, of his reasonable will.

Mr. Carlyle's doctrine is clenched by the assertion that, *Had Adam remained in Paradise there had been no anatomy, and no metaphysics.* Now certainly it has not been one of the results of eating the fruit of knowledge, to teach us what would, or what could not have been our state, if we had not tasted of it. Doubtless, as Bonaparte used to say, when he was met by a foul wind, or an unexpected frost,—But for this the destinies of the world would have been different!—a proposition not likely to be contested against the master of so many legions, but which we may now venture to smile at. If we can at all conceive a paradisiacal state for so anti-paradisiacal a being as man, it would be one enriched with all our blessings, and liable to none of our calamities. But as we conceive the knowledge of anatomy and of metaphysics to be among our most unquestionable, if not our most unmixed, advantages, we, for our part, should consider Paradise as decidedly improved by the admission of these, and indeed of all kinds of science as well as of art. Had Adam remained in a state of childish weakness as well as simplicity, which seems shadowed out in the brief Biblical narrative, he would probably have remained ignorant of many things which even Mr. Carlyle thinks worth

knowing. But had he begun to reflect, his thoughts, for aught that we can guess, must have followed the same laws, and been directed to the same objects, as those of his descendants.

2. Life, we are told, exists for purposes *external* to itself: therefore to turn away our thoughts from these to the processes of life is a practical error.

But surely no. If by these external purposes be meant the handling of material things, life has far wider, higher aims. We may learn and teach truth for the holiness of truth, and not that by her means we may eat, drink, and be clothed. Man, it is admitted, can attain to a knowledge, to some genuine vision or imagination of sacred laws to which he is subjected, and of a wondrous, boundless system which he belongs to. Is it ideally possible, or is it consistent with fact, that he can do this, and yet not, by an inevitable and no less rightful step onward, begin to sunder what is eternal and divine in those laws from what is spurious and accidental,—to widen by experience and reflection the first small arbitrary limits of that system,—to consider how, by what bonds of affection and necessity, he is connected with the All around him,—and to examine where and when he may and must, in order to free and healthful action, cut the temporary ties of custom and opinion, by which his range has been confined and his limbs fettered? If he does this, how can

the process be distinguished from that of philosophic reflection,—inspired intuition going before, but ever followed by, and alternating with, distinct self-consciousness? For of this self-consciousness the rise and final maturity are prophetically implied in the mere fact that man can reflect, and cannot live within the circle of his instincts.

3. Much grows in us, and much is given to us, of which we cannot discern the source, or trace the law. It is an intuition, an inspiration.—Yea verily. But so far is denied by no one, with whom there need here be argument. And further it is manifest that he who would close his mind against all suggestions of the true and beautiful, which he cannot pre-define and lay down in program, makes the speculative machinery, which ought to be but a tool in his hands, a torturing framework to confine them. Therefore, says Mr. Carlyle, to seek to know what can be known without exclusion or self-limitation, is but a diseased craving. Therefore is it a licentious daring and slow self-destruction to reflect at all on ourselves in relation to the Universe and to its Author. And therefore not only must all higher and ideal truths be taken for granted where they cannot be seen; but, even where they can, we must close our eyes, and feel for them groping. Depart then, ye profane! who fancy that life and light are not only organized and methodized in our structure according to a plan

which we may partly decipher, but that they enable us to apprehend and meditate on the limits which divide this conscious being of ours from the ocean of divine existence surrounding and sustaining it. Yet is it not rather certain that, only by such meditation, and the actions which it both prompts and purifies, can our humanity be preserved at once integral and progressive, neither closing itself against the radiance of the objective universe, nor letting itself lazily dissolve and be lost in those currents, from which, not by chance nor vainly, was it distinguished and impersonated into a man?

4. *Genius is ever a secret to itself.*—In the sense of inability to trace the channels and influxes by which what is best comes to it; this has indubitably its share of truth. How far it is true even in this sense may afterwards be considered. But let it first be noticed, that the consciousness which has been hitherto spoken of and justified, is the inward contemplation, not of what is peculiar in the individual, but of what is universal in the race,—of what characterizes, not a man, but Man. That the man of genius does not know himself to be a man of genius, might be altogether true; and yet this very man might study with unwearied scrutiny the workings of his own soul, not as his, but as God's; and as his nearest, and brightest, and by far his faithfullest, and his only perfectly open, summary of God's whole creation.

But even in the other sense, namely, that a man of genius does not know himself to be such, the assertion is to be admired for a certain felicity of courage, rather than for any ascertainable precision. There would be far more of truth in the opinion, that there never yet was a man of genius who did not know his own powers. But this it is not necessary to affirm. It is sufficient to maintain that there is no man memorable in literature for the highest talents, who cannot be shown to have well known that he possessed them.

In fact, there is only one person, whom Mr. Carlyle ever alleges,—and he is a stock example,—in proof of his doctrine: this one of course is Shakspere. As here, for instance, he says, "*The Shakspere takes no airs for writing Hamlet and the Tempest, understands not that it is anything surprising.*" Probably indeed he took no airs, though even this we do not know. He had better work to do than taking airs for *Hamlet*, namely, taking pains for *Othello*. And he was doubtless too thoroughly aware of his own greatness, to be vain of it. In his plays he says nothing on himself, and his own character and history, which can now be recognized to have that meaning. But in dramatic writing how could he speak of himself by name or obvious allusion? And finer and indirect references to his individual feelings and circumstances may, for

aught we know, be found in every page; but that our ignorance of the minuter facts of his life entirely conceals them from us. However this may be, we have the evidence of his sonnets to prove that, where occasion offered, he had no hesitation in speaking of his own genius, as of a matter which he was perfectly acquainted with. The 18th, for instance, concludes thus:

> But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
> Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
> Nor shall death brag thou wanderest in his shade,
> When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
> So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
> So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

The two last lines of the 19th are:

> Yet do thy worst, Old Time: despite thy wrong,
> My love shall in my verse ever live young.

And the two first of the 55th;

> Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
> Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhime.

Or look at the end of the 81st:

> Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
> Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read;
> And tongues to be your being shall rehearse,
> When all the breathers of this world are dead;
> You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen)
> Where breath most breathes,—even in the mouths of men.

And in the 107th it is thus written:

> And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
> When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

The whole basis of the notion, which these passages superabundantly refute, lies in the apparent indifference with which he treated his plays in not publishing a complete edition of them. But for this there may very possibly have been external reasons which we are not aware of. He did print the larger number of his works; which is sufficient to prove that he aimed at something more than theatrical success. The language of his first editors sounds as if he had intended to publish the whole collection himself, but was prevented by death.

It is also well worth considering, that, however high Shakspere's estimate of his own powers might have been, he had no facts before him from which it was possible to imagine the importance that English books were to obtain in the annals of mankind. The only books then thought of with veneration were in Greek, Latin, or Italian. That an author writing English could thereby become one of the capital figures in human history, was concealed, possibly by nature's kindness, certainly by inevitable circumstances, from him who was best to realize the truth. Spenser indeed knew otherwise; but Spenser read Italian, and was a professed imitator of Italian poets, who had done in their language what he wished to do in his. But literature, except as learning, and that chiefly theological, was held in small esteem, and gave no social importance. It is evident that Shakspere's

plays ranked high in general repute among the dramatic productions of his day. As much is plainly stated, as well as elsewhere, also in the preface of his first editors, Heminge and Condell, "*to the great variety of readers.*" Now these same editors prefixed to the volume a dedication as well as a preface. This is addressed to the two brothers, the Earls of Pembroke and of Montgomery. And hear how these friends and comrades of Shakspere write of his works, even after his death, which might have been expected to raise prodigiously their tone in speaking of him. "Right Honourable, Whilst we studie to be thankful in our particular for the many favors we have received from your L. L., we are falne upon the ill fortune to mingle two the most diverse things that can be, feare and rashness; rashness in the enterprize and feare of the successe. For, when we value the places your H. H. sustaine, wee cannot but know the dignity greater than to descend to the reading of these trifles; and while we name them trifles, we have deprived ourselves of the defence of our dedication. . . . We cannot goe beyond our owne powers. Country hands reache forth milke, creame, fruits, or what they have; and many nations (we have heard) that had not gummes and incense, obtained their requests with a leavened cake. It was no fault to approach their gods by what means they could; and the most, though meanest, of things are

made more precious when they are dedicated to temples."

This was the language of the chosen friends whom Shakspere had commemorated in his will: and among the many proofs of the low estimation in those days of all literature, which did not come under the head of learning, it would be hard to discover any to us more striking. An Earl of Pembroke was of too great dignity to descend to the reading of poems, which we now know will be read and treasured by millions when the House of Peers itself shall have sunk into the grave where lie those wondrous Earls; nay, will be the wonder and delight perhaps of new continents sprung from the deep, when England, with her chalky cliffs, shall have melted again into her limitary seas. We know that, if in the wreck of Britain, and all she has produced, one creation of her spirit could be saved by an interposing genius to be the endowment of a new world, it would probably be the volume which the author's friends, after his death, thought too insignificant to be read by two courtiers of King James I. And because we know this, we fancy it wonderful that they and Shakspere did not know it, as if the sudden vogue of pamphlets and ballads for a few previous years could have suggested to them any such result. As well might one imagine that Shakspere ought to have anticipated the discoveries of Newton and the inventions of Watt.

But from this ignorance of his as to the future historical importance of his works, how strange does it seem to infer that he had not discovered his own creative and intellectual superiority to all about him: though of course he had better things to do than habitually to repeat to himself, *How much sweeter and nobler a singer am I than my elder, Marlowe! How much freer, and fresher, and more bland a spirit than my younger, Jonson! How much more thoughtful, fiery, deep, and substantial than the moonlight soul of Spenser!* Yet that he did not know himself to be all this, we can find neither proof nor probability.

And how far more astonishing is it to suppose, that, because he did not foresee the destiny of his works to be the best inheritance of his countrymen through all time, therefore he had not looked into his own mind, and found there,—there, where alone it could be found,—the interpretation of the dream of human life which floated round him,—that he had not discerned, in the feelings and thoughts which he was conscious of, the hint and explanation of those which he moulds now into an Imogen, now an Othello, now a Hotspur, now a Falstaff. This must be proved by stronger evidence than even an assertion of Mr. Carlyle's. Nay, properly, no evidence could prove it; for the thing must be seen as true and eternal in itself, or is incapable of being known at all.

As to all the other men most memorable in

Christian literature, the case is clear. No one can overlook the proud, even fierce, self-consciousness of Dante, the distinct praises which he fearlessly bestows on his own labours, the inward, melancholy scrutiny, which is the theme of the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convito*, and the whole plan and tone of the great poem, which may not inaptly be described as a journey through the kingdoms of self-consciousness, exhibited in images of the outer world, such as the eyes and as the fancy see it.

No less plain is the self-gratulation of Cervantes, and his avowed preference of his own writings to those of his contemporaries; and all who value Don Quixote as anything better than a farce, have ever seen that the poet drew the substance of his work, though perhaps undesignedly, from the depths of his own character, its visionary aspirations towards impossible good, and the incongruous failures to which time and circumstance exposed his longings.

That Milton's grandest, as well as his most trivial writings are undisguised fragments and glimpses of Milton's individual self, all will admit, and no one more readily than Mr. Carlyle. His moral reason, exalted into the region of pure intelligence, and invested with crystalline glory, constitutes, not suggests, the highest beings of his Heaven. His austere, concentrated, often baffled human affections are the originals of his earthly personages. And his passionate and gloomy self-

will, like his shadow thrown by a flash of lightning upon the snow-wall of an Alpine ridge, supplies the shapes and the demoniac stature of his nether spirits.

Of Goethe it need here only be said, that a graceful and easy, but most assured sense of his own worth, circulates through every fibre of his creations, and is uttered loudly enough on suitable occasions. No writer ever existed, in whom one finds more of direct self-observation. Much even in his works, which is not in the form of psychological remarks, yet in substance is nothing else, though endued with the most beautiful and cunningest of mythical and fabulous imagery. If Mr. Carlyle persuades himself that Goethe's example lends any support to his theory, the pensive reader cannot fail to be reminded of certain zealous divines, who discover the most peculiar of the Christian mysteries in the legends of Pagan poets, and in rites on which the Christian Church made implacable war.

5. We have next an attack on Logic. Here Mr. Carlyle is of the opinion of so many metaphysicians, that a knowledge of the process of drawing inferences from principles is not an important help towards drawing them correctly. Very possibly this is true. This process however, though the study of it may not be of much importance in the practical art of thinking, is yet one portion of the truth of our nature, which does

lie completely within our ken, and which it can injure no one to understand. The syllogistic scheme, though as certain as the Rule of Three, is no more than this any substitute for the higher logic by which we decide on the premisses we are to reason from. This great and primal science is, precisely on account of its depth and compass, far more difficult to bring within any systematic limits. The knowledge of it is the aim of the highest speculation. The noblest moral effort strives to realize it in the being, and not merely to embrace it in the intelligence. Its realities are the vital germs within all true poetic images. And these primitive verities are as much more wonderful and beautiful than the logical forms by which we connect them with our experience, as the starry Heavens are sublime in comparison with the brazen tubes and glass lenses of the astronomer.

But this view of the dignity and sanctity of those seminal principles of things and of knowledge, which the technical, drudging logician is apt to overlook, seems no way inconsistent with a belief in the use of logic, as a clear exposition of the rules by which mankind instinctively and universally reason from their experience, whatever that experience may be. The inadequacy of such subordinate and instrumental logic to make a man wise cannot be too clearly seen: but hardly less important is it to understand that it has no such

evil consequences as Mr. Carlyle attributes to it. It is well worth considering, for instance, that the Schoolmen, instead of being, as he seems to imagine, the least wise, were the most wise of all men living in their times, doing, many of them, the best practical work, and often with hearts awake to all excellence and beauty which the world had then disclosed before the eyes of European men.

When we find a Luther, a Napoleon, a Goethe, cited as intuitive in contrast to dialectic men, is it not plain that they had simply a larger amount of inward and outward facts, and a clearer insight into the master idea of the business in hand than others? and that from these primordial truths they reasoned, not with less, but with more logical swiftness and force than others, and the two Germans with a full and sharp consciousness of the process and method of their thoughts?

6. Virtue is next subjected to the same iron yoke and Caudine infamy as logic. And here, above all, do we seem to find the inanity, or at least extreme imperfection, of the view propounded to us. Be it admitted,—be it enforced by word, deed, and life, that man, to be worthy, must live in a sphere of pure voluntary impulses to good, the flow of which has become habitual, and is the result of many moral victories. But when men have learnt to reflect on all other things, how is it possible that this alone should not be to them a

problem for reflection? Where the will in all its aims is generous and grand, and therefore necessarily, in smaller and more conventional phrase, right, is it not certain that the insight gained by such reflection will in turn corroborate and renew, not debase and infect, the strength of the better promptings? How weak, unstable, vacillating from right to wrong, from truth to falsehood, and certain to be driven from precipitate appetite into dreariest doubt of all things,—how dreamy and half-sincere is that virtue sure to be, which, unreasoned of, misunderstood, taking itself for granted, dwells in a mind awakened to the meditative knowledge of other principles, but only not of moral ones!

How sad an image of the chaos and ruin of our age is shown us to mourn over, when a wise and brave man, if such there be on earth, is driven, in the recoil from empirical corruption and mechanic theories of the essentially hyper-mechanical, into hymning the praises of blind ignorance, and well nigh envying the condition of Homer's warriors, or of the peasants who in England, in the nineteenth century after Christ, are left almost as dark as they!

Oh no! True it cannot be, that *to the popular judgement, he who talks much about virtue in the abstract begins to be suspicious* . . . . that *ages of heroism are not ages of moral philosophy; that virtue, when it can be philosophized of, has become*

aware of itself, is sickly and beginning to decline. The great Athenian teacher of virtue was not less, but far more virtuous than any of those who scoffed at him,—far more heroic as a citizen, as a soldier, as a man, than those who would have returned to the old unthinking days of merely manual heroism. Cicero was hardly a worse man than Clodius or Catiline, who wrote no books *De Officiis.* Seneca was not the most earnest of seekers after truth; but it would have been well for Rome and for the world, had he, not Nero, ruled the empire. It was Marcus Aurelius, and not Commodus, who wrote the Meditations which have supplied the motto to *the History of the French Revolution.* In the midst of that dark Syrian corruption, he, who realized in his life a higher good than Plato or Antoninus taught in writing, was also the great preacher and doctor of the truth which he practically revealed; and his words are known as widely as his name; and by himself was it declared that they too *are spirit and are life.* Or will it be said that Paul was no ethical expositor, and that Luther never unfolded in many a volume the reason of the law, which he obeyed while he lived in freedom above it?

7. Of Mr. Carlyle's anathema on sentimental morality, little need be said. It is most true, and in our age most necessary to be spoken; but it makes nothing for his purpose. Not by silence,

not by unconsciousness, but by high, earnest teaching, like his own, of what man's true greatness is, may the foul and nauseous imitations, the corpses painted beyond the tint of life, and festering and rotting within, be shown for the dead and shameful things they are.

8. The subsequent passages on the evils of a self-conscious state of society are in some respects most brilliant, and even suggestive of truth. Yet there can be few readers who will not feel that the author wants the full and clear command of the idea, which, not being manifest to him, confuses him with hints of its presence, such as only serve to make darkness visible. It is impossible to controvert the proposition, that some one period in history is unhealthy as compared with another: for what measure have we of the moral unhealthiness of a period? To some it might seem that the tenth century, when there was hardly any but theological reflection, and no diffused and public thought at all, was a less healthy age of England than the sixteenth, when there was so much, or than the seventeenth, when there was more of manly majestic character than in any other time of our annals, and when also there was endless speculation on all the great questions that have ever excited the human mind.

Let us here episodically note, that, in the essay on *the Signs of the Times*, it is somewhat marvellously said of the English nation in Elizabeth's

day, "They had their Shakspere and Philip Sidney, where we have our Sheridan Knowles and Beau Brummel." In the strength and richness of human nature, abundant, stately, saturated with life, like tropical vegetation, the days of Elizabeth had at least an apparent superiority to ours. But the point would perhaps have been less grotesquely maintained by a reference to Walter Scott and Wellington, rather than to Knowles and Brummel: for in those times also there were to be found in London poets of less than the highest genius, and fops to quite the highest absurdity. But, as of Sidney, it is better worth remarking, that he, like all gentlemen of his age,—Mr. Carlyle's peculiarly favoured period, —was trained in the scholastic logic,—that his own writings are full of ethical dissertations and high-flown speculative rhapsodies on moral excellence,—that he patronized not only Spenser but Giordano Bruno,—the most abstract intellect among all the metaphysicians of that age,—and that his chosen friend was the Lord Brooke, whose writings are still in our hands, and furnish one of the most remarkable memorials of a sleepless, brooding self-consciousness to be found in all English literature.

This in passing. The question of the good and evil arising from, or implied in, the awakened consciousness of a nation, might lead us much farther than we can now travel. It can here be

only suggested, that the greatest period,—incomparably,—in the history of the world, in this respect, was that of the Reformation. Then the stone effigies and armour, the velvet suits and mantles, of the baronage of all northern Europe, —then the gaberdines, and cloaks, and formal decorums of the guilds and arts,—then the dust, and bones, and rags, and hunger, and servile rudeness of the labourer,—all started and crashed up in new portentous life, with thought working in every head, faith mounting from all hearts through all far-glancing eyes, and the eloquence of true inspiration pouring from millions of long-frozen tongues. When was there ever national self-consciousness, if not now? And who will say that this was not the most accepted of all times,—the most brightly illumined page in all the stained and worn, but still legible chronicles of human history?

It may be added, that the noblest day of Germany for greatness of character and public spirit, since that of the Reformation, was during the resistance to Napoleon, which followed, and manifestly in a great degree arose from, the manlier culture furnished by the high philosophy and philosophic poetry of the preceding fifty years.

What is more peculiarly and emphatically called a self-conscious state of society, appears to mean only that state in which so much know-

ledge is spread abroad among the people, that topics necessarily interesting to human beings, but which have hitherto been the property of retired students, or small classes, and distinct professions of men, are now generally discussed, thereby of necessity exciting the stronger feelings natural to larger masses of people, and stirring up men whose incomplete culture makes them more liable than the learned to headlong impulses, and beliefs at once passionate and visionary. But in these facts what wise man can see a predominance of evil? Where the new conflux of ignorance and knowledge produces, instead of the old torpor, active and hot delusion, there is but the one remedy of giving more knowledge, and so expelling the ignorance which is the poison-element in the fermentation; and when the uproar of the popular mind directs itself against institutions, knowledge will teach them,—for, blind experience having failed, only true knowledge can do it,—what is really good in these. Woe to those who attempt the maintenance of what is bad!

Leaving all further notice of the arguments and illustrations in the essay, it may be observed, that, of the men who have arisen to public view as thinkers in England during the last twenty years, the one of the most fervid, sincere, far-reaching genius, is also the one of the keenest and deepest self-consciousness. We will not do him

the injustice of pointing him out to Mr. Carlyle's abhorrence.

Finally, if we are not to return to some jejune fiction of a state of nature,—that is, to barbarous, to savage, and ultimately to brutal existence,—the consciousness of mankind must be more and more widely awakened, and their minds be thus redeemed from gross animal torpor, and from the hardly less melancholy state of merely mechanical speculation. In the finer and loftier spirits this consciousness, organized and fixed in systematic thought, in images of reality, and in free, self-commanding life and action, must form the substance of all philosophy, all poetry, and all heroism. Its corruption into idle vanity and diseased sentiment is doubtless also inevitable. But what good thing is there, what best thing, what love to man, what faith in God, which human frailty does not thus twist and crush into evil? If we are to wait for a good which cannot be abused, will Mr. Carlyle tell us how such is possible for a finite being, capable of infinite advancement, and therefore dissatisfied with what he already possesses, and uncertain of what lies before him? For what is our present life, but the dusk and wavering image of the Future and Final, seen amidst the smoke of the Past, which slowly and for ever burns around us?

This long examination of a single essay of our author is an evidence of respect for him, which

he at least will understand as it is meant. It is natural and unavoidable to speak more concisely when there is only applause to utter. May our readers feel that the admiration we express is no less sincere than the dissent.

Among the works of Mr. Carlyle, there is one fiction,—*Sartor Resartus*,—*The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh.* This consists of two intertwisted threads, though both spun off the same distaff, and of the same crimson wool. There is a fragmentary, though, when closely examined, a complete biography of a supposed German professor, and, along with it, portions of a supposed treatise of his on the philosophy of clothes. Of the three books, the first is preparatory, and gives a portrait of the hero and his circumstances. The second is the biographical account of him. The third, under the rubric of extracts from his work, presents us with his picture of human life in the nineteenth century.

How so unexampled a topic as the philosophy of clothes can be made the vehicle for a philosophy of man, those will see who read the book. But they must read it with the faith that, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, it is the jest which is a pretence, and that the real purport of the whole is serious, yea, serious as any religion that ever was preached, far more serious than most battles that have ever been fought since Agamemnon declared war against Priam.

One general consideration may enable the more speculative to understand how things can be united so remote and discrepant as are the visible clothes of men, and the invisible causes of All. Our doings all bear the stamp of some portion of our being. Now every portion of our being is inseparably linked with all the rest; and therefore each primary art, and every hereditary contrivance of human life, may be used as an emblem leading up to the conception of our whole constitution, and all its relations. Clothes then are of this universal indispensable nature, and so have a ground of perennial reality. Further they, like every thing that all men use, are made more or less symbolical, bear the image of time, country, character, and station, and so are true necessary hieroglyphics, in which all the history of mankind is to be found, expressed or understood.

In this book that strange style appears again before us in its highest oddity. Thunder-peals, flute-music, the laugh of Pan and the nymphs, the clear disdainful whisper of cold Stoicism, and the hurly-burly of a country fair, succeed and melt into each other. Again the clamour sinks into quiet; and we hear at last the grave, mild hymn of devotion sounding from a far sanctuary, though only in faint and dying vibrations. So from high to low, from the sublime to the most merely trivial, fluctuates the feeling of the poet.

Now in a Vulcan's cave of rock, with its smoke and iron tools, and gold and rubies,—now in dismal mines and dens, and now in fairy bowers, shifting to the vulgarest alleys of stifling cities,—yet do we always feel that there is a mystic influence around us, bringing out into sharp homely clearness what is noblest in the remote and infinite, exalting into wonder what is commonest in the dust and toil of every day. In this enchanted island, Prospero, the man of serene art, rules indeed supreme, and has his bidding lightly done, but oftener by a band of shaggy Calibans, than by a choir of melodious Ariels. And it is most bewildering of all,—for is not the common that which, by disclosing its strangeness, has ever the greatest power to amaze us?—that the Prospero is a man of our age, in our familiar garb, with no magic instruments but the words we all use. Even the Calibans and Ariels of the vision are the dull, customary tribe,—peasant, artisan, gentleman and lady, whom we know by rote as the obvious alphabet of our lives.

'Tis weird work all. If Jean Paul presents to us milk and wine, here, instead of wine, is alcohol and something more, and the milk what one might fancy not of a cow, but a she-mammoth.

Hopeless is the contrast, the contradiction, which the book at first presents, to all our common world, its laws, and usages, and familiar

insignificance. Nothing beautiful is here, nothing calmly, manifestly wise. We look at it not for its worth, but its oddity. Gradually the eye learns to find some dawning coherence and stability, as if it were not merely mist. Then one entanglement untwists itself after another: joint and lineament, plan and structure appear, intricate indeed, but palpable. At last we cross ourselves, and know not whether to laugh or weep, when we find that we were puzzled, not by the want of aught real and substantial in the object, but by the presence of so many more forms of truth and nature than we commonly discern in life, and which yet, although we knew them not, were ever there. These shadows too, now no longer illusive, are all compacted by their own vital unity, which excludes the unmeaning and alien, and brings the expressive and lasting elements of our time and being, however seemingly discordant, into smooth, indissoluble conjunction. In what seemed a fair-booth, half smoke, half canvass, full of puppets, toys, dolls, refuse trinkets, peering vaguely through thick confusion, there is discovered to be implied nothing less than a model, and that a living one, of the world itself; such as God in his eternity, and man in his six thousand years, have made it. The image is not indeed complete, but broad, full, bright, and most genuine, created and imparted by an earnest soul, to which nothing that lives and grows, and

is not a mere idle falsehood, comes as worthless. It is, in fine, a system of highest philosophy in figures of liveliest truth, and wanting only,—though this is not a small want,—the soft musical roundness and honeyed flow of song, to be a poem such as these latter days of English speech have not produced.

Much there is that at the tenth, no less than at the first perusal, must seem affected, arbitrary, and little more than mere burlesque. But the law which unites the capacity for all that is highest and most beautiful, with the tendency to see meaning in the commonest, even sordid things, —and the experience of all strongest hearts, that they must often needs escape, if they would not break upon the spot, from the fierce immensity of feeling into the homely fire-side circle of the ludicrously vulgar,—these (which to no one knowing what is in man, and not merely what comes out of him, can be unknown truths) explain so many seeming anomalies and discords, that all the rest may well be believed equally fitting, or, if not, but pardonably wrong.

There are indeed persons of high faculties and excellent cultivation, to whom a limited, conventional, rather than convictional, standard will make the whole distasteful. But,—blessed be that endless dawning, which for ever discloses more and more of the eternal within the narrow bounds of time!—this temper is ceasing to be that

of our age. Those who read the book for the worth that is in it, will assuredly not miss their reward.

Yet read without bitter pain it cannot be. The heaps of misery which lie about us intermingled with joys and hopes, are here sundered and looked at by themselves. The root of sorrow and evil is laid bare, and frightens the sunshine with its blackness. Nay, so intently and right onward does the author pursue his task of denudation, that it seems at last as if something physically dreadful were a-doing, and something half-demoniac were at work; the secret of which impression seems to be, that in this book the mind is not brought into agreement with that great movement of nature, of which our universe and life are but the momentary result and manifestation. Science in one way, in another purely imaginative poetry, creating what is quite distinct from the poet's individuality, and in a third mode the calm completeness of active morality,—these differently, but all truly, reproduce in a human form the mild, profound unity of the whole system of being. In each of these aspects of things we see how fire and storm, strife and death, pain and evil, are but superficial disturbances of the great concord, which, could we so stand apart from them as to unriddle their meaning, would always be beheld but as necessary to the existence which they seemingly threaten, and elements of that music with

which we fancy them, and as practical beings must assume them, to jar. But here, in this volume, the orgasm of shaping thought and desolating emotion bursts with ruin through the stedfast bounds of science, of art, and of conscientious activity. The author brings together creation and destruction, to work precipitately and face to face in open conflict, not with their true and everlasting, though unacknowledged alliance. His own heart reads the purport of their operation, and eagerly feels the greatness of their tasks, but shares none of that sublime tranquillity in which the twain repose, nursed at each breast of their mighty mother.

That in these world-encircling speculations and symbolic designs, which alternate from the small sharpness of Hogarth to the measurelessness of Michael Angelo, there is much omitted, much distorted and overdrawn, cannot be surprising. He who the most sincerely believes in and admires the excellence of the man and his works, will be able to see no little that he must think altogether mistaken. But be it ever remembered, that there is more of profitable truth in the errors of the wise, than in the just conclusions of thoughtless men: and even where there does not appear to be any high principle,—perverted into an equally grave delusion, but still there, and to be recognised, though disguised and contorted,—yet there is always some great and pure feeling, working,

however questionably, and forcing us to reflect on the depth of its source and the grandeur of its objects.

Teufelsdröckh represents it as a mere delirium, that the village of Dumdrudge, having no private Dumdrudgian quarrel with any French village whatever, should send out thirty of her working sons to kill and be killed by thirty French wearers of *sabots*, in some corner of the south of Spain, merely because the rulers of the two countries have fallen out. Yet it needs not a philosopher or poet to see that the village of Dumdrudge had far better do this, than wait to have pillage and massacre and worse brought to the parish green and into every cottage, by the injured innocents who ravaged Spain rather than England, only because England would not let them visit her first.

Independently of this particular instance, there is a vapid, common-place view of the whole matter, such as Teufelsdröckh would probably think one had better die than hint at, much less utter, but which is not the less true. For Dumdrudge gains considerably by belonging to a country having a government of some kind. A government must have power to decide on many things, and among these on war and peace, for all its subjects, Dumdrudge included. Being fallible, it may very possibly decide wrong, and nevertheless be better than no government at all. Moreover, with or without rulers, men, being pugnacious,

will fight and kill each other; any one man who chooses to go to war for a wife, or a wigwam, or a copy of *Sartor Resartus*, having, in a state of nature,—that is, a savage state,—the power to compel any other man to do battle to the death for these possessions. For constables are decidedly a product of government, and not, like their staves, of vegetation. Finally, few things can be more certain than that fighting is reduced by political society, from every man's most necessary occupation, to be the trade of a comparatively few, even if every Dumdrudge sends her thirty every year to be drilled and shot at.

This view is not fitted, like Teufelsdröckh's, to amuse and elevate the universe; but that with our limited faculties it should appear to us truer than his, is, we must admit, our misfortune rather than our fault. Nor indeed, when Herr Teufelsdröckh condescends to disguise himself, and to discourse on governments and society like any mouthing quack philanthropist and friend of humanity, is the simple-minded reader to be solely blamed, if for a moment he fancies that the professor is no other than what he pretends to be. When the philosopher seems to consider Botany Bay as the true Atlantis, Utopia, and Isle of Heroes,—the convict-hulk as the ark in which the faithful few are divinely set apart,—and all gaols and treadmills as the sacred retreats and mystic grottoes of the only modern saints and sages,—

whether even a Teufelsdröckh can pass without suspicion, while teaching a doctrine so subversive of the Old Bailey and the New Police, let remote posterity decide.

This statement is in fact only a very temperate caricature of opinions which frequently appear in these works. It may be hoped that there are few readers who will not see them to be errors generated by the corruption of serious truths. They suggest a point of view so neglected and so unpopular, and at the same time so important, as a corrective of the opposite and reigning onesidedness, that they will probably be of far more use to mankind, than the reiteration of the axiomatic principles, which we have repeated and taken for granted, till we have nearly ceased to understand them.

The book is the most extraordinary mixture we know of the purest and rarest truth with much truth in itself of equal depth, but here exaggerated into not merely hyperbolical phrases,—of which indeed there is little if anything,—but hyperbolical opinions; opinions, that is, which have fallen over the battlements they were placed to defend, and been dashed into separate pieces or confused lumps. Any man who, although thus erring, at the same time utters much and original wisdom and poetry, is of course a person of strong abilities, and, if all is done with unaffected earnestness, must be of strong character also. Here

purpose and faculty, will and talents, are combined and exist in friendly union, and all in the highest vigour; and it is not the least charm of the book, that it supplies some seminal hints on the mode in which a mind so marked and so capacious has been formed and ripened. Nay, a zealous student will often be inclined to suspect that, in Teufelsdröckh, a British biography looks through the widely different and much exaggerated mask of a German one. It is impossible not to connect the characteristics which run through all these volumes with such passages as the following: "To look through the show of things into things themselves, he is led and compelled. The 'passivity' given him by birth is fostered by all turns of his fortune. Everywhere cast out, like oil out of water, from mingling in any employment, in any public communion, he has no portion but solitude and a life of meditation. The whole energy of his existence is directed, through long years, on one task; that of enduring pain, if he cannot cure it. Thus everywhere do the shows of things oppress him, withstand him, threaten him with fearfullest destruction: only by victoriously penetrating into things themselves can he find peace and a stronghold." *Sartor*, p. 211.

In the doctrine of Teufelsdröckh also, as in that of Mr. Carlyle, belief in Goethe holds a chief place. [*Sartor*, p. 262.] Yet here too it must be said as before, that those who look

in the Professor for any great conformity of opinion or character with the poet, will be much disappointed. Among innumerable other differences, there is this most marked, that the sympathies of the Privy Councillor are chiefly with the wealthy and cultivated classes, those of the writer on clothes rather with the poor, the vulgar, —in a word, the cultivating. Goethe respects all established things merely as such, and troubles himself but little to enquire how this or that has grown into authority. Teufelsdröckh's instinct is to embitter himself against all that is, so far as it is the work of man. The reason of the difference perhaps is partly this, that Goethe could do all he cared to do, namely, be a poet and thinker of the highest order, in the midst of his actual circumstances; and therefore any disturbance of these was a mere hindrance to him, forcing him to adjust himself to a new state of things. Teufelsdröckh, on the other hand, though perhaps he knows it not, is pre-eminently a moral and political man, in soul, if not in act, a reformer, and one of Titanic bulk and force. Finding in the present no field and facts adequate to his longings, and unable to rest, like Goethe, in mere imaginations, he feels himself crippled and wounded at every step, and thinks it is his time which is out of joint. Not that, judged even by *his* total standard, the present age is at all inferior to any past one, but that it is his, and therefore partly

responsible for his dissatisfaction. For among the many and precious truths which the Professor not only talks of, but knows at heart, this is not one,—that he who has not peace within himself to-day, would not have it, whatever he may fancy, were to-day changed into a yesterday or a to-morrow ever so distant, and in its remoteness ever so alluring. Teufelsdröckh discerns, and can point out, a path traversing the far past and the far future; but,—as is so often known of a faint track upon a moor,—around him, where he is actually walking, he can hardly discover a vestige of it. There all seems confusion; and although he walks forward, as a wise man will, towards the line of path before him, using what marks there are to guide him, yet he journeys in tribulation and horror, inwardly cursing the day that he was born, while he recounts aloud the grounds which he unquestionably has of contentment,—nay, of rejoicing. Goethe concerned himself little about the past, except for the use he could make of it, and not at all about the future, because from it he could derive no profit. But he stept cheerfully and bravely on in the midst of the present, where he felt that his work lay, and did his work with joy. With joy Teufelsdröckh works not, but with all the stronger courage: for he toils on, wanting all the poet's cordial impulses of happiness. He finds wisdom and implements, and a niggard but sufficient sup-

port, everywhere around him; here a Mentor, there a ship,—always bread and water,—and, when needful, an entrance to the prophetic land of spirits; only nowhere a mild and musical tranquillity of heart, which for many a meaner mortal has stood, as well it might, in lieu of all outward help.

There may perhaps be found some rude analogy between the men, him of Weimar and him of Weissnichtwo, both of the Universe,—and the hot spring of Iceland, boiling among snows and blasted rocks, compared with a sunny river flowing from its distant hills by groves and meadows, and beautiful hamlets and king's porticoes. But the image is far from doing justice to the harsher and less halcyon soul.

In closing what it has occurred to us to say of Mr. Carlyle's writings, it would be wrong to omit all mention of the *History of the French Revolution*, although but a passing and most insufficient notice can here be given to it. Of all books in the English language which the present age has given birth to, it is that which, most surprising and disheartening men at first sight, seems afterwards, so far as can be judged from the very many known experiments, the most forcibly to attract and detain them. The general result appears to be an eager, wide ebullience of the soul, issuing in manifold meditations, and in an altered and deepened feeling of all human life.

The book has made no outward noise, but has echoed on and on within the hearts of men. Instances might be cited, without probably one exception, of persons of the most oddly diverse characters, and of kinds and degrees of cultivation no less unlike, from, as it were, the grass beneath our feet and the hidden flowers in cold green nooks, to the pine and oak of amplest growth above our heads,—all equally, though most differently, affected by that electric blaze.

How can this be explained? By popular delusion,—say perhaps those who hold themselves undeludable; as indeed they are; for darkness cannot be darkened. But this book is not, hardly can be, popular. The crowd have no part or lot in the matter; deeply as the influence of the work may act, which all wise books do, more or less, on the condition of them and their descendants. Nor can that well be a delusion, which gives men new and more varied thoughts, lively, far-piercing emotions, and which instils divine energy, the wine of truth spiced with the balm of pity, into souls before dormant, and walking the world as dreamers in a land of dreams. But it is an old and faithful saying, that, where there is no eye to see reality, there is ever an eyebrow waiting to rise in scornful wonder at the name of it. Where the substantial hand to grasp things worthy is wanting, there is always some thin shadow-hand to wave them off with mocking

gestures. But the living truth, thus slighted, will assuredly outlast the dead contempt, which carries its own death-poison in its essence.

This history is in fact a genuine breathing epic. Complete and fixed in its design, it thrills with life-blood through and through. It shows how the most golden fancy, and the most vivifying imagination may be exercised in all their glory and fullest flood, within the bounds of the literally true, of that which was transacted in the lives of our fathers, and which filled with its jar and smoke, and diurnal apparitions, the pages of hundreds of newspapers.

Yet does it contain many sayings, which a friend of Mr. Carlyle's might be pardoned if he wished to blot out with tears. These are painful in different ways, and would be hard to class under one head. But their most general character is that of a hatred for things as they are, showing itself in cool mockery at their destruction, and in joy at manifestations, however monstrous, of the will to destroy them; a temper which, discovered in a man so superior to the average even of thinking men, gives much to ponder on, and at least something heartily to lament. Among passages of this cast, we remember none so obviously and so afflictingly perverse and noxious, as the conclusion of his account of the September massacres.

It is hardly necessary to say, that we have no liking for the slimy mud-sea of corruption into

which the French government, and higher classes, had sunk themselves during the last century. If any consideration could increase the disgust which the spectacle raises, it would be that they brought the people to a state, or left them in one, which made the villanies of the Revolution possible, while rendering the Revolution itself a most necessary and wholesome purification. But these views have nothing in them to diminish the horror, which all but madmen, or sane men in moments of madness, feel at such proceedings as those of September; for in these there was the foulest, most astounding proof of the extent and force of wickedness, rankling under the smooth surface of European life.

The deliberate slaughter in broad day,—nay, day after day, in the chief and most polished city of the continent,—of many many hundreds of perfectly helpless men and women, trembling prisoners locked up in gaols, with no offence pretended against them, but that they wished to preserve the social advantages which they had inherited from long generations of their ancestors, —this was an act of desperate and cowardly brutality, which may well, even now, make any human being shudder at the amount of moral poison hidden,—perhaps still working,—in the veins of modern society. No one but a blockhead, and that one speaking with extempore inspiration, rather than with a moment's fore-

thought, would allege the *number* of lives destroyed, for any other purpose than to prove that the thing was not done heedlessly as insignificant. And if pestilence, or the shipwreck of a fleet, had devoured ten times as many, who would now be at the pains to speak of the matter? The curse of the thing is in the black, malignant passions which urged on the work. It may no doubt be alleged that the crime was one not of passion but policy, and done to frighten the Royalists into quiet during the struggle against the Prussian army. But even supposing that there was any danger at all of an aristocratic insurrection, which the historian does not attempt to establish, it is plain that so enormous a precaution never could have been resolved on, but by men either utterly vitiated in their whole souls, or at the moment under the influence of the most atrocious feelings. Probably the authors of the massacre are guilty in both respects. Thus it was that they broke through all the restraints of moral custom, which he who defies, except in order to promote some still higher than customary truth, is in the most justly hateful class of human beings, and not the less hateful, the more we hold him also deplorable.

It is on this very ground that is placed a half-explicit, faltering defence,—not the less grievous because spoken with some reserve. The concluding words of the narrative are these: (vol. iii.,

p. 65.) "Instead of shrieking more, it were perhaps edifying"—alas, no!—"to remark, on the other side, what a singular thing Customs (in Latin, *Mores*) are; and how fitly the Virtue, *Virtus*, Manhood or Worth, that is in a man, is called his *Morality* or *Customariness*. Fell Slaughter, one [of] the most authentic products of the Pit you would say, once give it Customs, becomes War, with Laws of War, and is Customary and Moral enough; and red individuals carry the tools of it girt round their haunches, not without an air of pride,—which do thou nowise blame. While see! so long as it is but dressed in hodden or russet, and Revolution, less frequent than War, has not yet got its Laws of Revolution, but the hodden or russet individuals are Uncustomary,—O shrieking beloved brother blockheads of Mankind, let us close those wide mouths of ours; let us cease shrieking, and begin considering!"

From this it is hard to imagine otherwise, than that the writer conceives the difference to our feelings of the death of a thousand persons in battle, and the same number by massacre, arises from the commonness of the one and the rarity of the other fact; as a death by fever attracts less notice than a death by drowning. But O! shame, shame to use the wonderful power of words for thus darkening men's plainest and holiest knowledge! The difference is not in many or few, custom or no custom, hodden or scarlet, but in the

souls, the purposes, the feelings of the men who do the deed. Let a hundred thousand people, once in ten centuries, perish by earthquake; and yet a single midnight murder wrought by revenge or avarice, such as every day's newspaper records, is to the eye of reason a more fearful, awful occurrence than the wide destruction of a city. Nature's immediate extinction of myriads of her children is but doing all at once what she does hourly throughout the world; now indeed in a way more impressive to the imagination, yet with no peculiar moral import. But the existence in one man of the spirit of Cain, of cunning, ruthless malignity, which casts aside not only all human compassion, but the divine reverence for the life of man as a thing consecrate and inviolable,—and this at no bidding of sudden passion, and in no hot thirst of conflict, much less at the clear command of reason, which authorizes the judge to condemn the desperately guilty, the soldier to fight for his own country against a foreign one,—this is a new and peculiar fact, sufficient to appal every man not too near the brutes for even the dimmest meditation. In a battle how different is the case, where the man who takes life, no less exposes his own; where the sense of right is so strong that not only the base and ferocious, but the gentlest and most thoughtful, feel themselves engaging in no vile, unhallowed work, but are purified and nerved by sympathies, beliefs, and

that religious help of custom, — by patriotism, loyalty, discipline, pride of profession, fellow-feeling with thousands equally perilled, and the ennobling sense of danger encountered for the sake of an idea,—which all so light up with their blaze the whole of life, that the shades of death are lost and melt away in the splendour. But in the cold, tame, dangerless assassination of a herd of miserable prisoners from mere hatred of their class and names, or even, if you will, from the wish to intimidate others,—and in its inconsistency with all the practices of modern life, which had no palliation of habit to disguise the hideousness of the act,—who does not see a revelation of evil sufficient to dishearten and sorely wound the highest faith in all possibilities of good?

Thoughts so plain and sad as these Mr. Carlyle will call *inarticulate shrieking*, and will speak of the *wide mouths of blockheads*. We should be sorry to exchange the sorrow for his ill-timed and poorly imagined sophistry and scorn, painful as such regret is, against the sardonic comfort with which he will no doubt regard all similar comments.

It must however be said, that there are few, if any, other passages so wretchedly perverse as this; and much of the book, probably by far the greatest part of it, is as pure and grand in feeling, as it is distinct and glowing in the images which

it presents. It is however throughout a book that makes the heart ache more than Tacitus, though somewhat in the same way. It has nothing to cheer, nothing to tranquillize. But that which most agitates, and like sorcery possesses the reader, is not the tale of idle folly drivelling on till it ends in the worse earnest of madness, and horror thickening the pure sunshine with the reek of death;—not the overthrow into infernal ruin of the oldest and most habitual state of things, with all its honours, brought before the mind's eye as distinctly as if present to that of the body, and teaching the least considerate how insecure for all men are the softest and most valued circumstances, and that he only who can always be faithful to himself, has aught lasting to rely on. That which darkens and scares us more than all this, is the perpetual sense of the writer's wasting toil of heart, of the immeasurable weight of pain and grief which he has not ceased to bear,—the stern resolve, compressing the mad furies of the soul, but unable to cast them out. What a spectacle is it to see such a man as this, so rich in endowment, so decisive and victorious in performance, who yet finds the world, and the world's law, and the law of his own nature, so ill a friend to him, that he more sympathizes with almost the worst rebellion against all law, than with almost the best submission to it; that he thinks a Roland, a Vergniaud, only ridiculous; a Turgot

coldly respectable; while a greedy ruffian Danton, a mass of brutal self-will and reinless appetite, kindles his admiration, and almost his love! Dull must the breast be, which shall not deeply receive, and retain for ever, the great image of a man on whom has been laid the doom to feel more acutely, to love more absorbingly, hope more grandly, will more bravely, than all around him, and yet has reaped from these capacities,—not joy, not peace,—but a more biting sorrow, and a heavier gloom, than afflicts his weaker comrades. A fact to be long noted,—an abyss to be stedfastly, mournfully, not irreverently gazed into: for this is no showy, self-indulgent discontent; rather is it one of which he who suffers, himself says nothing, would willingly cease to think, and betrays it only, but most clearly, by his view,—so heroic, so wide, and yet so sad,—of all his world and aims. Were it a theatric affectation put on to be stared at, the trick has been made the most of by others, and worn to rags so sordid that none could now well mistake them for a king's mourning garments. But here all men feel that, though the opinions may be wrong, the style extravagant, and what amount of error you please to assign in the whole scheme of the man and his writings, yet the foundation and buttresses of the evident genius are self-forgetting earnestness and manly simplicity. These are not lies, not matter

of shifting costume, but truth tried seven times in sevenfold fire.

It has more than once happened, in the course of this essay, that the name of Luther has come in contact with that of Mr. Carlyle; and on the whole, startling as the assertion must at first sight seem, and extreme as the outward differences undoubtedly are, there is no one known in literary history, whom the British writer so nearly resembles in the essentials of his character. None but the least reflecting can need to be reminded, that their discordance of opinion and total dissimilitude of conduct, instead of being objections to the truth of this resemblance, are the necessary conditions of its existence: for, could the same mass and kind of energies and capacities, which constituted the man of the sixteenth century, be reproduced in the nineteenth, they would of course no less deeply and lastingly receive the altered influence of a time so different. It would be a poor jest to pretend that any one claims for the later thinker the importance in the world which three centuries have proved to be the right of the Saxon Reformer; but no fear of being misunderstood and ridiculed need suppress the statement, that in the type and scale of their tendencies and faculties there is a genuine likeness. We find in both the same sincerity, largeness, and fervour, similar sudden and robust eloquence, and

broad and unshackled views of all things,—a flowing cordiality based on a deep and severe, often almost dismal and sepulchral conscientiousness,—an equal liability to fierce and scornful prejudice, and indulgence of the ultimate possibilities, almost impossibilities, of exaggeration, yet with an entire superiority to merely frivolous and ingenious paradox. In each, one sees in everything the man says, and not merely in the great and premeditated proclamations, the same individual physiognomic stamp,—the royal broad arrow, not only on the anchor and the cannon, but on the gimlet and the tenpenny nail. Their fundamental unity of conception lives in a religious awe of the Divine, as revealed in the universe, and in the inspired hearts and heart-kindled acts and utterance of men. The true knowledge of this, pouring itself out at great epochs in poetic deeds and words, has always been subsequently analysed into dogma, and stifled and petrified in authoritative, not intuitive symbols. Now of both these men it is the great labour to restore the old free animation of this truth, and to lead men to find in the enjoyment of it the only, but all-sufficient, liberation from selfishness and death.

In this enterprise, far unlike indeed is the language and demeanour of the German schoolman, married monk, and tamer of popes and devils, from that of the English writer in our day. But our day is a time of steam-engines and 'news-

papers, of natural philosophy and representative constitutions. Scientific scepticism has pulverized the histories once most surely believed, which reappear only in the forms of avowed historical romances. But of all these prodigious innovations, which have stripped the father of lies of so much traditional costume, and at the same time have taught us to detect the presence of his numerous family in so many things that our ancestors believed as certain truth,—for thinkers of Mr. Carlyle's order (by which he is likely to stand as firmly as any earl on record) there is none so important as the place which speculation, and especially that of the Germans, the children of Luther, has claimed and secured for itself. It is an all but immeasurable change, that science has now and for ever seized the right of deciding on the premisses which she shall admit,—is not merely bound to the duty of accepting those supplied to her, whether by the decrees of church-councils and theologians, or by the creeds and canons of the bodily senses. Leaving to religion its own practical rights, which are everlasting, and which no other power can arrogate, science now postulates only what is essential to the scientific construction of knowledge. She leaves the feelings of reverence and duty to glorify, as conscience and faith require, the principle which she herself acknowledges as the highest affirmation of the intelligence and the essence of all being; but she

refuses to accept their representation of her primal truth, as that which is valid for her. This crisis, which has expelled from the sanctuary of pure intuition everything but that ideal which is necessary as a centre for consistent thought, and has left external tradition and assertion, however authorized, to fill only their appropriate place in the affections and practical life, has made philosophy a new and independent world, surrounding with its diaphanous circle the spheres of all other knowledge and belief. Insight thus purified and realized has, in our view of the matter, taken for Mr. Carlyle the place of the warring and incongruous schemes which battled in Luther's brain and life; for the Reformer's philosophy halted between reason and authority,—the blind power attempting to thrust itself into the seat of the luminous one, and to make its own laws imperative over a rival, which, though outwardly subdued, still inwardly rebelled against the usurpation. This modern revolution of thought has thus given to the man of our day, and of Luther's mould, a clear and coherent image of existence, unattainable by the highest intelligence three hundred years ago. And this appears diffused throughout all Mr. Carlyle's writings, though often in grotesque forms, and with a vindictive ill-will to speculation, not because it is so remote from, but because it is so near to his heart. For his controversy against philosophy is a mere do-

mestic quarrel, between parties who dispute with the less restraint, because knowing that they never can be separated.

But though a person of strong heart and wide vision has thus in our time advantages on the theoretic side unknown some generations back, the practical side of the account is far less obviously in his favour. Then, the very tyranny of the moral and religious scheme, which made itself the arbiter of speculative truth, as well as of its own axioms and rules, rendered life narrower and more false, but also more compact and unquestionable and easily to be managed. Men, by dint of faith, were at ease and satisfied in the midst of dark intellectual confusion. Christianity set the bounds and measured out the foundation of science as well as of duty,—claimed to be, and for devout men was, mistress of all thoughts, as well as all moral actions, was the lyric sibyl, the wise enchantress, as well as the holy dedicated vestal. Now doubt has come in; denial has established its irresistible claims over much that was once held sacred; and it is a hard task for the wisest to determine where that which has unquestioned right to go so far, shall find its just limitation and be bid stop for ever. Then, the principles which men disobeyed in practice, they unanimously held to be true, in a sense in which no wise man now maintains them; for instance, in their arbitrary application to physical facts, as

well as to the elements and pathways of all speculation. So that, however sure the victory may be, there is a battle to be fought, often a life-long one, by the best of minds, which men of this stamp were not, or not much, exposed to in the age of the Reformation. Then moreover, religion established a partial indeed, and capricious, and partly erroneous, ground for all scientific thought, but still a high and solemn one;—far transcending, not men's moral wants, but the pretensions of their gross appetites and carnal experience. Now, the world not only professes religion, and practically disregards it, but talks of truth, and means thereby the mere arrangements of outward life, in opposition to all genuine philosophy asserting any high and independent ground: for it is the decree of the sovereign populace among us, that philosophy is merely experience generalized, and not the correcting and balancing antithesis of experience, which alone makes its facts intelligible to the seeking and wayworn reason. Men assuredly did not do what Luther and Savonarola taught,—but admitted that they taught rightly. Men now as little do what the wise man counsels; but moreover they deny what he believes, yea knows.

Distracted enough therefore, and perilous is the condition of him who refuses to walk by the lantern,—dark, not because closed, but because there is no candle in it,—which custom points to

as a source of light, and being herself blind knows not its worthlessness. When men have begun to think a little, and have not yet learned to think rightly, their belief in their own infallible omniscience is apt to be proportionate to their ignorance; and accordingly they hate him who knows the truth, which they only dream of: and his refusal to dream contentedly with them passes for an insane rebellion. Add to these outward ills the hindrance which he must strive against within, the spectres and shadows of the valley of death which he must confront and overcome, if he would not be to himself a ghastlier apparition than they; and we may somewhat guess how hard, and of how more than pagan heroism, told of historic champion, or fabled of demigod, his task must be, who would now walk in this world stedfastly and with clear light, and breathing the air of wisdom's astral climate, while his feet are amid the mire and pitfalls, the tainted sepulchres of the dead, and unclean beasts that frequent them.

In this state of things, and not solely in original dissonance of character, we may perhaps find the explanation of one marked difference between the man of the sixteenth century and the similar man of the nineteenth. The former could speak out heartily and devoutly in the full confidence of faithful, humble reception from his hearers; but in our days we find the no less fervid utte-

rance of an equally practical and positive spirit turning back in irony upon himself, and by his tone of caustic, rather than poignant self-mockery giving the most peculiar and emphatic expression to all his teaching. Luther's irony, when he does resort to it, is all polemical,—a sword to attack. The Englishman's is generally self-repressive,—even more than self-defensive,—as a mantle in which he would wrap his head, and shut out the images of his own zeal and indignation.

Here must end our remarks on the admirable writings of a great man. Could it be hoped that, by what has been said, any readers, and especially any thinkers, will be led to give them the attention they require, but also deserve, in this there would be ample repayment, even were there not at all events a higher reward, for the labour, which is not a slight one, of forming and asserting distinct opinions on a matter so singular and so complex. For few bonds that unite human beings are purer or happier, than a common understanding and reverence of what is truly wise and beautiful. This also is religion. Standing at the threshold of these works, we may imitate the saying of the old philosopher to the friends who visited him on their return from the temples, *Let us enter; for here too are gods.*

CHARACTERISTICS OF GERMAN GENIUS.

FRAGMENTS FROM GERMAN PROSE-WRITERS. TRANSLATED BY SARAH AUSTIN.

(From the Foreign Quarterly Review for 1842.*)*

SOME have experienced, and all can imagine, the pleasure of waking in a new long-desired country, with vague wonder and uncertainty how that foreign life would present itself, and then receiving its first greetings from a fair smiling figure, who presents us with a nosegay of unknown flowers, and looks our welcome to the fields they grew in. Such must be to many English readers the interest and joy imparted by this rich and graceful, as well as truly friendly offering; which is at once a garland of fresh flowers, and a string of lasting pearls. Perhaps no other prose literature but that of Greece could have furnished the materials of a volume at once so wise, so bright, and so varied; and those Hellenic books, nearer than any modern can be to the age of primeval awe, and combining, as no other, childish liveliness with mature thought, yet want some of the nobler, the very noblest elements of our Christian world, and the clear complete knowledge of nature and history, which in our time we require, and which the Germans, beyond all other people, have realized. In truth, resembling the Greeks far more than

do the writers of any other nation as to elevation and fulness, they have for us the incomparable merit that they are the children and teachers of our own time. At all events, whatever may or may not be the value of German literature, it is plain that Mrs. Austin is, of all English persons, the one who has best succeeded in making its worth clear and pleasant to merely English readers. Mr. Carlyle, with his deep spirit and prophetic originality, has been, and will remain we suppose for ever, the great hierophant, disclosing to prepared minds the truly divine wisdom of that modern Holy Land. But it requires to have something of a "foregone conclusion" of Germanism within us, and much of the temper of a devout neophyte, to receive the infinite benefit of his teaching. Mrs. Austin, with the unpretending ease and felicity of her soft, open, womanly nature, interprets to all like one of themselves, in familiar though choice language, whatever can be so communicated, of the Beliefs, Images, and Feelings, that the highest hearts and most creative geniuses and most sagacious inquirers of modern times have bestowed upon the world. Let us acknowledge our obligation by sitting beside her,—it is no painful position,—in the same great school.

Her book is one that hardly perhaps permits, and certainly does not require, any comment. Nor do we propose attempting one. But Mrs.

Austin, and her and our readers, will pardon us if we make it an excuse for offering some remarks on the history of modern literature, and on the place which that of Germany holds among the higher products of Christian Europe. That in the last twenty-five years it has gained a universal importance, is plain matter of fact. The writings of Chateaubriand, of Byron, of Manzoni, have excited a wide and eager feeling; but none of these men, nor any of their countrymen, have produced a work, the object of repeated translations and commentaries, like the *Faust* of Goethe. And it is well known that this poem does not stand out from the other literature of its country, as something different in spirit, but only as of greater depth and more perfect execution than most other German books, many of which, besides those of its author, are analogous to it in purpose and tendency.

A little wider survey teaches us that, as a matter of European interest, the theories and images of the Germans succeeded immediately to that place which had been occupied just before by the great writers of France; by Voltaire, and especially by Rousseau. It is not only that every cultivated person is expected to know something *about* these Teutonic singers and sages; but their feelings and opinions reappear in the works of their most celebrated contemporaries in all other

countries. For instance, among us, Scott and Byron had both of them been anticipated in what is most essential to them by German authors; though no doubt the Feudalism of the one, and the Suicidism of the other, are more fully developed in them than in any foreigners by whom they may have been influenced. Still more remarkably than in poetry, the philosophical speculations of all Europe are daily learning obedience to the example of Germany. M. Guizot is a pupil of those deep and zealous schools. Cuvier was himself by birth and education a German. Coleridge is the genial interpreter of the lore, now of Kant, and now of Schelling. Mr. Wordsworth, who under the guise of a poet is pre-eminently a high hortatory moralist, teaches only doctrines (except when eulogizing Archbishop Laud, &c.,) which might be found long before his works appeared, even more fully and vividly declared, in all the most illustrious masters of our ancestral Teutonic speech.

Some parts of this statement must pass for the moment without evidence, as we cannot now wait to support it in detail. Indeed it will be denied, we believe, by few persons having a wide prospect over the world, that this German literature, or the state of mind which it expresses, has, both in extent and seriousness of influence, a remarkable meaning. This, Madame de Staël

perhaps rather wished than quite attained to recognise and explain. But, mistaken as are many of her notions on the subject, and (we suppose) all her translations from German books, it is evident that she had really felt something great in the minds of that country, something that far exceeded her previous Parisian standard, and was not even included in the large and radiant, though spotted orb of Rousseau's genius. Substantially her belief has become that of the intelligent world; and the fear perhaps now is, not so much that German literature may be insufficiently valued, as that it may be prized on wrong grounds, and used to mistaken purposes.

We will try to indicate some of the steps by which mankind moved on to the production of that German literature, the worth of which we hold indubitable by any one who, after due preparation, has really searched into the matter.

The combination of urbane and courtly elegance with ecclesiastical power, wealth, and wisdom, produced in Italy the earliest modern literature that can still be called much more than an object of antiquarian study. This glory, failing with the wholesome earnestness of the Church, whose decay produced beyond the Alps the Protestant Reformation, did not outlive that great change by much more than the life of one generation. Tasso died before the close of the sixteenth century. The beauteous strength of the Ca-

tholic times lingered longer in Spain, where it had been slower in unfolding itself, and had been invigorated and hardened by its long conflict against the Koran. Calderon, whose life filled more than the first three-quarters of the seventeenth century, was the last great Catholic poet; and we may safely affirm that the world will never see another. Not of course that there may not be great poets born Catholics, and nominally, or even in a certain sense sincerely, such throughout their lives; but that the days are long past when the form of feeling characteristic of the middle ages, and filling them with mystic many-coloured glories, can be the atmosphere and lifeblood of a great man.

Long before the death of Calderon, nay before his birth, the bloom and richness of Europe had shown itself in the remote north under a very different shape from those dear to him. His predecessor Lope, the contemporary and more prosperous rival of Cervantes, was a soldier on board the Armada, which would have invaded England. But no doubt he little knew that, in the cold and cloudy land of heretics, there was then a burst of thought and imagination, the fame of which in aftertimes would far exceed his own.

We had at that time among us a combination such as existed nowhere else, of the mental freedom and social vigour of the Reformation, with the stateliness and strength of feudalism.

The result was the age of Elizabeth and Charles, —Shakspere and Cromwell. It is now clear enough to all Europe, that the England of Shakspere was one of the chief scenes in the long drama of the human intellect. It succeeded to the splendour of Italian genius; for at this time German thought was merely theological; and France followed mainly in the same track. Then broke out our civil war: and literature thenceforth became among us a matter either of pedantic research, or frivolous lightness, or practical utility; not a free and beautiful outpouring of the heart. The material interests of our commercial and parliamentary life occupied the strongest minds so completely, that our lighter works were the productions only of second-rate men, and are, in the history of the world, entitled but to small notice. In truth there could not be any minds of a very high order, when every thing was bartered away that makes men great,—enthusiasm, romance, poetry, the ideal in all departments but the useful and luxurious arts.

Now came the turn of France, the age of Louis XIV. Corneille, Racine, Molière, Bossuet, Pascal, and Fénélon, and at last Voltaire, were the representatives of a period in the history of their nation, analogous, though not similar, to that of Shakspere, Spenser, Ben Jonson, Raleigh, and Bacon, among us. They gave to modern

literature a clearness, precision, and obvious symmetry, which it had never possessed before; and then they died: though Voltaire, with his eighty years, lived over into a totally new epoch. This later day may be called that of the French revolution in facts, that of the German revolution in ideas; two great changes closely but not very definably connected, in their causes, as well as in their dates. By the German period of ideas, we mean one in which the imagination had far wider and deeper aims, and speculative inquiry a much more serious and more comprehensive character, than in the preceding French epoch; which however had also bequeathed to its successor more of knowledge, elegance, system, and conscious clearness, than had been attained by England in her greatest age.

It may be remarked that, as Tasso lived after the Reformation (died 1595), and was contemporary with Shakspere and Spenser, so Milton (died 1674) might have seen every one of those great writers of the age of Louis XIV., except by much the latest as well as longest-lived, Voltaire: and similarly Rousseau (died 1778), on the whole certainly the deepest and grandest of the French men of genius, saw, though he knew nothing of, the great outburst in Germany, when Winkelmann, Lessing, and Klopstock, led the way for Herder, Goethe, Kant, and Schiller. In each case there was one memorable chrono-

logical link between the departing and the coming period of human strength.

Having thus cast a hasty glance at the mere succession, in order of time, of these great movements, it may be worth considering what were the predominant circumstances affecting the intellectual character of each country, as shown in its literature.

England, in the hundred years that followed the accession of Elizabeth, was more alive with various hopeful energy than it has ever been since. In physical prosperity, enterprise of all kinds, in stirring thought, poetic freedom and greatness, and moral fervour and heroic conscientiousness, all combined, no similar period in the history of any nation has ever excelled this. Perhaps there have never been two generations in any country comparable to these. In point of mere date, Spenser, Bacon, Sidney, Shakspere, and Raleigh, might have been brothers; and Hobbes, Milton, Jeremy Taylor, Strafford, Hampden, and Cromwell, were the contemporaries of their sons. Down to the restoration of Charles II.,—the end of this extraordinary age,—feudal splendour, commercial activity, rural freedom, catholic authority, and biblical zeal, seemed all blended and balanced; the rich and golden life of the earlier half of the century gradually yielding to the sterner subsequent forces; till at last, when all else had passed away, the religious poetry of

Milton rose as the peal of a single organ over the tomb of Cromwell, amid the lutes and drinking-songs and oaths of Charles the Second's court.

In fact, in the Stuart portion of this hundred years, though much of learned culture, poetic impulse, and high-born dignity still remained, the materializing commercial tendencies were gradually gaining the dominion, which they have now so long boasted; and were then far more strikingly accompanied than in later times, by that somewhat hard and narrow, but still noble theological dogmatism, which is the only higher kind of power that in recent times seems ever to have allied itself with the activity of Anglo-Saxon trade. Those puritan wars were only the fierce transition to the orderly, stiff, prosaic, aldermanic form of national life, which has prevailed in this country ever since.

Of this state of existence the explanation seems to be, that trade, diffusing wealth and a certain, strictly limited, intelligence, secures what is sometimes called freedom; that is, representative government; and gives the character of more or less shrewd and solid, but very unheroic men of business to the mass of the community. On the other hand, all serious human action develops the need of a moral law by which it may be governed. But mere practical life only seeks to have this law made as definite as possible, and enforced by the extremest sanction;

and hence rejects as dangerous all scientific inquiry into human duties and destinies, and shuns all question of the coherence and completeness of its creed, provided only that it be applicable and positive. We must take into account also the political weight of what is once established; and hence the repugnance on the part of constituted authorities to intellectual movement, except within a very definite sphere. The road is made, the toll-gates settled, money paid at them with grumbling, but without resistance: what wonder that all concerned, from trustees down to stone-breakers, feel a sincere public-spirited suspicion of plans for new visionary railroads? And these latter, once established, as naturally join the remains of the old turnpike interest, to vilify the chimera of superseding all roads whatever by the use of wings, seven-league boots, or any other transcendental furniture. On the other side, in behalf of men's nobler tendencies, little is to be said in this case; but that knowledge even in the weary, greedy multitude has a certain weak expansiveness; and the wealth which brings leisure and luxury to the few, will also ask for intellectual amusement, and will generally let some of the gilding of sofas and chiffoniers overflow on the frames of pictures and the covers of books. Which helps to man's higher culture we are far from denying, though it may be doubted whether they are quite all-sufficient.

In this state of things then, we are sure to find, 1. An endless repetition of moral and religious commonplaces for practical use; 2. An infinite bustle of political discussion adapted to the comprehension of all, and therefore to that of the least comprehensive; 3. Scientific inquiries into "matter and motion," such as can be at all connected with money-making; 4. Frivolous literature in a perpetual succession of novelties, made for to-day, and gloriously independent of to-morrow. But under none of these heads could we expect to find any thing deeper in meaning or wider in survey, than an enlightened public can relish. Little could be hoped of true and energetic originality. And genius itself, which comes from Heaven, and cannot be prevented by the happiest mechanization of man, would hardly break out except either in some loose and loud subserviency to the multitude, or with faint-hearted dishonest adherence to the letter of what is orthodox, or by mad revolt, as in melodious Shelley, against nature and necessity, no less than laws and men.

In France, after the long confusion of civil wars reaching down far later into their history than those of our middle ages, we find social life, and literature which embellished it, assuming under Louis XIV. an elegance, finish, and festal splendour, previously unknown in Europe. Every thing became neat, and much magnificent; but

still, after the manner of courts, all in clear preappointed forms, with reason itself appearing only in the shape of *etiquette*. Yet the robust free life of feudalism more or less survived, and showed itself in the characters of many of the marshals and nobles,—how plainly, for instance, in the Duc de St. Simon!—and even in the writings of the great authors, though under somewhat rigid control, and with a rather obsequious decorum. Literature had its pedantic unproductive side in colleges and monasteries, but, as a public fashionable matter, was fitted to the luxurious tastes of a court and nobility. The middle classes, long before so powerful in England, had not yet in France risen into importance. Hence the prevailing books had neither the plain serviceable utility of our common moral disquisitions, nor their careless manner, any more than the brave liberality and largeness of our Elizabethan age. It was evidently proper that pains should be bestowed on what was meant to amuse and instruct a great king and his highborn nobles. Then too, and long after, very little was to be gained by copyright from the public; so that a terse and concise style, in harmony with the mental clearness and compactness of the race, very naturally came to characterize the productions of Racine and Bossuet. The colleges and ecclesiastical authorities, with their popish traditions and rich endowments, helped to secure

elegant culture and finish. But their influence, and the tastes of a court, were alike opposed to any meddling with first principles; and the main elements of all high knowledge were required to be merely taken for granted. These writers show, perhaps better than any others in the history of the world, how far it is possible to go, in the absence of very varied natural life, and of deep and free philosophy. The genius of Molière rose above the pitch of his contemporaries, and in spite of seeming destiny, made him a great original painter of life, and a worthy companion of Montaigne and Rabelais, who had preluded, somewhat as Chaucer among us, to the glories of a later age. His *Misanthrope* is more truly Shaksperian, more simply, deeply drawn from the realities of the human soul, than any thing we have seen of the professedly Shaksperian school now shedding blood by pailfuls on the Parisian stage. This play in fact anticipates Rousseau, and stands in a very singular relation between *Hamlet* and *Faust;* and in like manner *Tartuffe* strikes the key-note of much that most distinguishes Voltaire.

This author of Zaire and Zadig, with all his bold scepticism, seems only a vigorous and progressive survivor of the age of Louis XIV. He himself hints, not obscurely, his claim to be the Euripides in a triad, of which Corneille and Racine formed the earlier pair. Sentimental

emotion and all the refinements of a pleasant life had been the main objects of the authors whose Parnassus was Versailles. Even the state preachers spoke of death and judgement with ceremonious grace, as if to make the Christian pulpit contribute its share to the polished entertainments of the court. And they, and all their lettered compeers, seemed to give up a tithe of their worldly amusements in obedience to the Church, by way of securing a continuance of the remainder in a future life. Voltaire had spirit and shrewdness to contest the claims of the bishops, for the fragment which alone they asked. By fifty years of multiform resistance, he made his protest good, and at last had all France with him.

But, in the main, while disputing the commands of the hierarchy, he obeyed without an audible murmur two other recognised powers; the laws of the state, and the rules of social custom. Rousseau arose, and rebelled also against these. Voltaire had mostly aimed only at relieving the world from a priesthood and a faith, letting it last in other respects as it was. Rousseau insisted that men must have a belief, though a reformed one, and that this reform ought to extend to their political constitutions,—nay, to all their habits, tastes, and practical convictions. If, as we ought, we leave out of view whole masses of inane egotism and dialectical paradox, we must

own that he combined in his wonderful genius the most impassioned affection and the most earnest reason; and, with all his faults, was more than any man the precursor and representative of the great intellectual revolution, which had begun in Germany before his death, and has extended more or less to all Europe.

To Germany, our final object, we now come. It is certainly at first sight a very singular fact, that its literature, from the Reformation for more than two centuries onwards, was almost wholly either of a scholastic or a commonplace character. Theological, antiquarian, nay, speculative books, there were in abundance; and the great, truly encyclopedic name of Leibnitz has hardly a superior among modern scientific thinkers. There were also many works of a practical kind for the people. But of men of lasting eminence, writing classical books in German on matters of general, not purely academic, interest, there was not one till less than a hundred years ago. The want of high and universal worth in German literature must have been decided enough, and known to be so, when Robertson dared confess, with no particular appearance of shame, that he had written the history of Charles V. without being able to read the language of that country which Charles ruled as emperor,—the language, by his use of which Luther in Charles's reign revolutionized Europe.

The slow maturity of German thought is on

consideration intelligible enough. In the first place, all the other highly civilized parts of Europe were at one time ruled by Rome, and retained always some strong traces of classical culture. In England indeed all Roman refinement seems to have been swept away by the northern invaders; and it is the only part of Europe, once Latin, where this can be said to have been the case. But our Norman conquerors, succeeding to the Saxons and Danes, came to us from France, where they had learnt a language of itself half Latin, and many arts and tastes derived from the same noble source. The subsequent long and close connexion of our sovereigns, nobility, and clergy, with the more enlightened country they sprang from, had an evident and great effect upon Britain. Here then was one means of knowledge and humanity almost entirely wanting to the Germans. Hence perhaps mainly it is that in modern times the German courts displayed but little sensibility for intellectual pleasures, till influenced in the eighteenth century by the example of France.

Secondly, of the great European countries, Germany is by far the most inland. Spain and Italy are almost insular; we are entirely so; even France has a land frontier on but one and a half of its four sides; while Germany is open to the sea on but a portion of its northern boundary; and the greater part of that sea-coast looks to the land-locked and remote Baltic. Hence there were not

the natural causes prevailing over all the West of Europe for the growth of a wealthy and quick-witted commercial class. And thus neither courtly nor mercantile refinement arose as early as in Latinized and maritime countries. Rude nobles and poor serfs composed the people of Germany, long after polished aristocracies and rich intelligent burghers had filled other lands with graceful arts, and brought forth the various national literatures of the modern world.

Thirdly, the religious wars caused in Germany by the Reformation filled the whole following century, and did not end till the middle of the seventeenth. In France, where civilization was already far more advanced, they occupied but a few years; and in England nothing of the kind occurred till after our greatest intellectual age, and then only disturbed six or seven years, and hardly interfered at all with the progress of the country in the arts of peace.

These considerations may help to explain the fact, that Germany, after occupying almost the whole of Roman Europe, and placing her sons on all its chief thrones, and then inventing the printing-press, and bringing forth Luther, was yet left far behind by England, France, Italy, and Spain, in the elaboration of that free, varied, and beautiful modern culture, which in recent times it has more completely appropriated and perfected than any of its rivals.

But perhaps the very causes which retarded the efflorescence of Germany, also secured that the flowers, when at last disclosed, should be more abundant and richer. For what was it but the strength, depth, uncommercial quiet and solidity of the nation, that brought out the Reformation among them? And were not these the virtues which, two centuries after, fashioned themselves into the Lessings, Goethes, and Kants? What but the absence of political centralization, the division of Germany into many states, so long gave up the country to wars for religion, which must have ended far sooner, had the land, like France and England, been under one government? And this very plurality of states and capitals, with their courts and universities, has been among the most obvious and certain causes of that widespread, varied, unshackled intelligence, which the torpid priestly colleges of England, and the single tyrannical metropolis of France, have alike, though in such different ways, prevented in their respective countries.

This slight, though, we believe, accurate sketch of a great subject, may possibly seem imperfect; for want of any statement why Spain and Italy have done nothing in modern times at all comparable to the intellectual achievements of the three principal northern countries. To this difficulty also something like a plausible answer can be furnished. It is not because they have had no Pro-

testant Reformation, or, as in France, a Revolution of equivalent energy. For we must still discover *why* this has not taken place. The explanation appears to be as to Spain, that the long struggle against the Moors made hatred of heresy the one serious passion of the people, and thus gave them up more entirely than any other Europeans into the hands of their clergy. Then the possession of America rendered the sovereign independent of the nation. And thus king and priest, the natural and reasonable representatives of the highest forms of social life, obtained and used their power to extinguish all national force and health in slow, shameful decay. Fire indeed remained under the ashes, and at last has burst out; nor, we trust, will the blaze be quenched again.

In Italy the mischief sprang from other causes. The consolidation of the great monarchies of France, Austria, and Spain, surrounded that country with neighbours too strong for her divided force to encounter. Her physical structure made it easy to attack her in detail, and hard for her to rally round any centre. The power of the Bishop of Rome, inherited from the old civil pre-eminence of that city, set apart one portion of the peninsula under a consecrated rule, with which it was impossible for the other states to coalesce. Thus inwardly distracted, nay cloven, and alternately overpowered and parcelled into small despotisms by one or other of her neighbours, Italy

too sank into a languid imbecility, which only now and then utters some detached phrase, recalling her former and still latent strength. Had Rome been governed by any sort of temporal ruler, he would gradually, no doubt, have united all the other Italian states; and then, in confidence of national dignity, every individual citizen would have risen into higher life. But the anomaly of a superannuated old clergyman governing, in the name of God and of the Fisherman, the former capital of the civilized world, was itself enough to make it impossible that in modern times he should extend a dominion, the foundation of which was thus equivocal.

Taking up our former inquiry into the history of the German mind,—what seems most peculiar to that nation, among all those of Europe, is the number and strength of the universities, and at the same time their freedom from ecclesiastical trammels. The nature of the land itself with reference to commerce and other particulars, the kinds of government, and the political divisions, the diversities of religion established in the several sections, the national character with its deep and steady fire, and the tranquillity and seriousness of its social habits, all these are important points. But, as discriminating Germany from the other great European countries, there is, we think, no fact nearly so significant and productive, as the existence of a great number of

bodies of men selected for their eminence as thinkers, and set apart to think, and permitted to declare their thoughts with perfect, or nearly perfect, freedom.

We see at this instant an Oxford professor of unquestioned piety nearly worried to death for controverting or supporting (we forget which) St. Thomas Aquinas. A German may proclaim his agreement with Plato, Spinoza, or Shaftsbury, and his disregard of all the Fathers and all the Reformers; and in all probability, if he shows sincerity and genius in doing so, he will gain an increased salary, the cross of an order, and a larger body of pupils. It is not very difficult to perceive which plan is the more likely to make profound philosophical inquirers.

In England and Italy, even in France down to the Revolution, there was neither any such abundance of institutions for the highest knowledge, nor any such liberty in those existing. Accordingly in these three countries it has been almost exclusively in physical science, in matters only remotely connected with theological dogma, and therefore exempt from its control, that there has been any steady conjoint progress, any recognised independence of inquiry, and a deference in the government for the opinion of the most competent. In Germany alone has the case been memorably otherwise. We find there an organization of men's highest interests and ten-

dencies, neither crushed by the jealousy of civil rulers, nor perverted by ecclesiastics to serve the purposes,—most important no doubt, but not alone important,—of their profession. Perhaps it would not be too much to say, that, as the representative institutions of England and America are gradually being adopted by all the civilized world as the best instruments for arranging men's outward and material concerns, so the day must come when the intellectual progress of mankind will stop, or something like the German universities be everywhere established, and endowed with at least as healthy and noble a freedom as has been allowed in those bodies. In that country,—poor as Germany is compared with England and France,—there may now probably be found the greater part of the generous knowledge and earnest meditation extant on earth. But Oxford and Cambridge, with perhaps more wealth than all the German professors together, certainly do not contain six men who have added a jot to human knowledge, except in the physical sciences, and not more than two or three, if so many, whose names Europe has ever heard of in any department. The monastic spirit of these establishments cannot be expected to produce better fruits; and we must rather pity than blame the individual men, the victims of a system that they fancy themselves bound to defend.

As the total result of these causes and revolutions on the banks of the Rhine and Elbe, what do we find? A modern German literature no doubt, which lies before us and around us, and is studied as the modern French and modern Italian by those who have a taste for polite accomplishments. Something more however there is than this. These German books are not merely in a language of their own, but have a whole physiognomy and character, distinct, original, not only very unlike either our own or any other writings, but also perhaps of a deeper, wider kind.

What then, we would ask, is the word,—for there must be one,—which more nearly than all others expresses the specific character of the more celebrated German writers during the last half or three-quarters of a century? Let us try some of the more popular solutions.

Is it *homeliness?*

No, they are not more homely than Goldsmith, or Crabbe, or Walter Scott; not more than even Theocritus or Homer. But they combine homeliness with a higher somewhat, which we hardly find elsewhere in this connexion.

Is it *affectionateness*?

Scarcely this either; though it is true that their philosophers recognise, and their poets delineate, a warmth and fulness of the feelings, and not merely of the passions, such as other modern

writers do not attempt except in spasms of sentimental exaggeration. But this is not universal in these foreign works, and is not peculiar to them. Shakspere and Cervantes, Dante, Boccaccio, and Montaigne, abound in the same tone, which is also the familiar music of much of the ancient classical literature.

Is it then *mysticism?*

Surely in no sense of the word can this be found in the greater part of the poems of Goethe and Schiller. Popularly speaking, the word means nothing but *obscurity;* which, except so far as every thing worth understanding requires pains to understand it, is as little a fault of the German writers, excluding Novalis, as of any in all literature. A mystic is properly a man who does not seek to bring his own higher feelings and convictions into as much intellectual clearness as they are capable of, but loves the solemn gloom of indistinct emotion too well to approach it with conscious reflection. In this sense there are perhaps no men, having a deep faith of heart, so little chargeable with *mysticism,* as the more eminent of the German philosophers and even poets.

Is it then perhaps the opposite of mysticism, *reflection,* which distinguishes these men from the guides of other nations?

This, more nearly than any of the other characteristics we have tried, might seem to fulfil the purpose. M. Guizot has somewhere stated it as

the blame of German literature, that reflection is too prominent and general in its productions; that there is not a sufficiently clear, direct representation of the outward realities of life. But though there is more of large and accurate meditation in these works than in any other contemporary masterpieces, neither can this be styled their main distinction. We find it indeed as a most important element in their poetic works. But it cannot at all events characterize their philosophy; for that must always be entirely and purely reflective; and to say that one philosophy is more so than others, is merely to pronounce it the best. But neither is it, though conceivably of course it might be, the chief singularity of other than their philosophical treatises. There is in the mere descriptive department, in verbal landscape-painting, and the like, a clearness, completeness, and conciseness in much of the writing of these men,—as Goethe and Tieck, for instance,—to which we can find no parallel elsewhere; and in these two, and Schiller and Jean Paul, a true, free exhibition of varieties and greatnesses of human character, of shades and depths of emotion, which reflective thought could never have revealed to any man, who had not either felt them in his heart before his head took notice of them, or found them in human life before he generalized them into a theory.

Shall we then enlarge our phrase, and say that it is *knowledge* in general in which they excel?

In this also there is much plausibility. If we look at their speculative writers, there is an extent of survey, a mastery over the theories that all ages and countries have produced, and the facts that these theories were designed to explain, such as no school among any other people has had the least pretension to. Indeed, directly to translate, or indirectly to borrow from these men, is sufficient to obtain in other parts of Europe, and eminently among us, the somewhat dangerous repute of engaging deeply in the strangest of forbidden pursuits,—the black art of thinking. It is also an unquestionable fact, that their poets have had an acquaintance with philosophic speculation, with the theory of criticism, with the history of the fine arts, and with various languages and literatures, such as could hardly be found among those of most other countries. But neither can this be what constitutes the clearly felt difference between this and rival literatures. The difference is one too deep and fundamental for mere book-knowledge, however large and various, to explain. The whole view of life, and all the little unconscious turns of feeling that meet us in every page of their imaginative writings, spring from a far other root than that of either our popular bravura writing, or of encyclopedic learning.

Do we come any nearer our object in trying if *culture* will satisfy the sphinx?

So it may seem; for *culture* includes many of

the elements that we have already found in the great fact before us. Yet neither will this quite succeed. For culture will do every thing for man, but give him the original capacity on which it most successfully works. If culture were all, how far had a Voltaire been above a Shakspere, a Gray before a Burns, a Mengs beyond a Correggio, a Dugald Stewart ahead of a Spinoza! All which is much the reverse of true.

We require something from which,—granting the due circumstances,—culture, knowledge, and reflection, clearness and liveliness of painting, the seriousness that will to careless eyes appear mysticism, the affectionateness that fills a life and book with warmth, and the homeliness which is the proof of real interest in all the forms and conditions of human nature, must, as water from its fountain, rise and be manifest. And there is one power in man, which, with proper qualities of other kinds, and under favouring influences, will produce all that and every other good thing. There is but one. It is *Earnestness of heart.* This we do conceive to be the grand fontal characteristic of the better German writings, as compared with those that other nations have brought forth during these last three-score years and ten.

Here perhaps we might fitly stop. For where men have equal natural gifts, and equal circumstances, *Earnestness* is *all* that makes the difference. As to gifts, the Teutonic race are, in force,

fire, and clearness, the masters of the modern world; being indeed the conquerors of it all, and founders of its medieval Christian life. Their circumstances, as already we have partly seen, are not in later times less favourable, but rather more so than those of other countries: for they are in good measure exempt from all-confusing commercial bustle; and do not shrink under the tyranny of one huge feverish drunken metropolis; and are amply provided with *seats of free thought*,—at once cause, result, proof, and furtherance of this faithful national earnestness. Other things being equal, or even not grossly unequal, the most *earnest* people will be the wisest, most melodious, most creative; and this is what we esteem the Germans to be, as shown in their modern books.

In France all or most that is loudly written, and similarly spoken, seems designed for instant effect on a vehement gregarious race. Nearer ourselves we see much of a literature more for household use, and regarded mainly as a convenience for the domestic soul. Each country also shares in the blessings characteristic of the other; and Germany in turn has enough of the same froth and dregs as its neighbours. But it has begotten all the greatest masters of thought produced in Europe since the time of Rousseau; and Tieck and Schelling are still alive to represent in the flesh a literature, which for compass, loftiness, and enduring beauty, for all that Earnestness

must in our modern world attempt and realize, is quite unlike almost any thing that either we or our nearest neighbours can boast of.

Happily for us no great European nation has so close a relation as ourselves to these sons of the weird northern Muses. We may largely gain by using those rights of kindred, which they have been always proud to insist on. For in varied tones and utterances,—of calm reflection, of dramatic personation, of lyric enthusiasm, of epic and idyllic narrative,—they teach us that our human life is not only, as it must always be, a course of hard toil, and a mixture of broken joys and sharp sorrows, but full of a divine meaning, and capable of immortal good. With deep meditative wisdom, and in forms of many-coloured beauty, they set before us a lesson, which England much needs, but is also most worthy to learn. Our coarse mechanical strength is mingled with a rich and strong element of conscience, humanity, and unwearied hope, but all tortured into maimed shapes, and wrapped in thick gloom. We may gain help towards the recovery both of light and beauty among the men who still gloriously consecrate the soil we first sprang from. There are many of us who delight in the manifold glowing world of Shakspere; others who have felt the tones of eternal truth in the slow chant of Wordsworth, in some piercing lyric phrase of Coleridge, and in the sweet bewildered wail of Shelley. Many again

have stepped more lightly over our toilsome earth in the presence of the bold shadows evoked from the past by Scott. All these living hearts, varied as are their habits and outward interests, will find leaders of their pilgrimage, such as all the earth beside does not afford, in the great men of modern Germany.

There is one quality of those modern German writers, which, it may be as well to warn unprepared readers, will strike them with wonder, and perhaps with fear. This is nothing but that freedom, to which we have before adverted. The greater of those men have used their fine and robust faculties in looking at life and nature for themselves; not in order to escape from duty, but to fulfil it more abundantly, and on a larger scale than custom would prescribe. There is nothing more common than the sight of persons, the despair of moralists in all ages, the *fools* named in Scripture, who throw off a burden which they are too weak to bear bravely, and disown whatever is high and pure within them, that they may sink into inert, mean falseness and brutishness. But there is another revolt against popular rules and laws of opinion, having a very different aim from this. The weak man, to get rid of his load, will cut off the arms to which it is tied, and maim his powers to escape his obligations; but the strong man, who refuses to "carry coals" at the bidding of others, claims only to choose his own load, and

will bear willingly and with painful fidelity a far heavier one, than the public opinion which he disobeys would have dared to lay on him. No taskmaster would have made those women, who carried forth their husbands as their most precious commodities, submit to a burden half so weighty. And thus it is with all who engage seriously in the task of life. Freely they choose, and freely perform, a work beyond the compass of all legal injunctions. For freedom is found at last to be nothing else but the willing choice of those conditions, which enable our best, most laborious powers, to exert themselves for the fittest ends. And this is the freedom towards which every noble soul feels, toils, and bleeds, as towards its native and only vital element, as the plant to light and air, the fish out of the net into the fresh unbounded water. This victorious effort it is, which glorifies more or less every truly great man; and above all in modern times, those of Germany; whose names we constantly hear connected with the charge of irreligion, licentiousness, and whatever of horrible that stupid tongues can devise to ring in stupid ears. As if profane irreverence, and mad self-willed resistance to reason, could ever be the characteristic tendency of thoughtful, humane, and imaginative minds. There is a freedom far unlike that of the escaped convict, and consisting not in doltish disobedience, but in the sacred and serene obedience of love to the highest rule of duty we

can find within us. Not such is the freedom secured by Magna Chartas, and Acts of Settlement, that guard us from the tyranny of kings, but leave us under the yoke of our next-door neighbour's eyes, and our newswriter's pen. Nor is any such liberty to be obtained by the most diligent compliance with all the precepts of ethics and theology, in which the heart and strength of a man may be as much confined, as his body if it were chained in a locked church. Divine commandments are but the commandments of divines, for him who does not feel that in compliance with them is the only liberation of his soul from death. A man who does not feel this may be gravely wrong, but will not get himself right by tying himself to the letter, in which he finds no spirit. The freedom of an earnest mind brings with it laws as strict and holy as any in the Pentateuch or the Canons, but also has tenfold strength for the performance of the only work on earth really worthy of a man. All the rest is the routine of a scourged and hoodwinked heart. Political freedom is a great blessing; but there is a still better kind known only to the good and wise, and of which Schiller and Fichte and their compeers are teachers and examples, such as Europe for near two centuries had hardly seen.

Connected, not very remotely, with this matter of spiritual freedom, is the remarkable fact, that, while, of the population of Germany, considerably

more than half are Catholics, every man who has gained an immortal fame in that country as a thinker, was born and bred a Protestant. As to the right of the greater number of the following names to appear in the list, there can be but one opinion.

Leibnitz	Hegel
Frederick II.	Schleiermacher
Lessing	Eichhorn
Winkelmann	Johannes Müller
Klopfstock	Jean Paul Richter
Herder	2 Stolbergs
Hamann	2 Schlegels
Wieland	2 Humboldts
F. H. Jacobi	Novalis
Goethe	Tieck
Schiller	F. A. Wolf
Kant	Voss
Fichte	Niebuhr
Schelling	Savigny.

Three of these illustrious men,—one Stolberg, one Schlegel, and Winkelmann,—became Catholics; the last, it is said, from mere convenience; the former two, no doubt, with entire sincerity. We might perhaps have added Werner, the dramatic poet, as to the purity of whose motives in the same change there seems to be no cause for doubt. But even these converts, all, except Winkelmann, but second-rate among the great, were formed in the comparative freedom of Protestant doctrine. Of the others, many, perhaps nearly all, were very far from what we commonly call orthodoxy, —that is, from believing that the Creeds of the

Reformers three hundred years ago, or any one such document, contain the whole and nothing but the truth as to man's spiritual constitution and destiny. But, though mostly heretics in the eyes of synods and consistories, and of our bench of bishops, they were generally far more completely removed from any allegiance to the doctrine of the Schoolmen, or to that of the Fathers; and the mere artistic and romantic admiration felt by some of them for the times of legend and miracle was only similar in kind to that which they cherished for the mythological beauty of early Greece, and even of ancient India. Except the two or three persons just mentioned, whose history is not very hard of explanation, there was not one of these men who would not rather have sacrificed his life, than the liberty of believing and feeling for himself in conformity with the promptings of his own soul, and with the spirit of the times he belonged to. If we remember that more than eighteen millions of the Germans are Catholics, this Protestant consent of all their strongest, deepest, and most genial minds, is perhaps as significant a fact as any that history presents. Not that it portends any triumph of Exeter Hall over the Vatican, and the Prayer-Book over the Missal, but that it exhibits the emancipation of all truly great minds from the bondage of all dead traditions, by whatever name they may be trumpeted.

Strange moreover as it may seem, with all their heterodoxy, there are not above five or six in our whole list whose writings do not indicate a far nobler, purer feeling of religion and of duty, than can be found in our Paleys and Watsons, and scores of well-reputed correct British theologians.

We have already stated, that in our view their most remarkable quality, and indeed the root of all their merit, is moral earnestness. It has also been pointed out that this Earnestness is combined with, or seen to issue in, a Freedom, of which the serious minds among us have in general but little conception. If now we further attempt to mark by one expression the *idea* which pervades this literature, and the consciousness of which all sympathizing readers must more or less obscurely derive from it, this may be called the WORTH OF MAN.

This Worth we find exhibited in each of the three great forms assumed by the genius of the Germans,—in History, Philosophy, and Poetry. History displays the facts of human nature; philosophy, the principles that the facts rise from and express; poetry, the symbols in which the principles are illustrated, and the facts more compendiously and vividly reproduced. In all these departments alike, the Worth of Man, the fellow-feeling that we owe, and the labour that the construction of our life requires and deserves,

are shown with a settled strength and complete beauty, far beyond the pitch of any other writings we know, but those of the Greeks, and superior even to them in depth and compass. We do not forget Dante and Ariosto, Cervantes and Calderon, Shakspere and Milton: but among the Germans we have a whole literature, and not merely one or two great minds; we have vast regions of philosophy and history almost unknown, and altogether unsurveyed, by any other nation. And even their poets, being much the latest that the world has produced with any thing like equal powers, have, though certainly not an absolute superiority to all their predecessors, yet an extent of knowledge, and, above all, a suitableness for us in this age, which earlier ones could not possibly be endowed with.

But in history and philosophy (*i. e.* what is commonly called metaphysics) the higher dignity with which man appears, than that which our popular authors allow him, is far more strikingly manifest. The ancient world especially has been as good as reconquered for us from waste darkness by the race of scholars, with Wolf, the critic of Homer, at their head, whose works are beginning, either by vague rumour or small samples, to make their way into England. Niebuhr, we all know, has reconstructed for us that old, stern, half-Etruscan Rome, which had lain so long buried under the ruins of her own later

empire, and chronicled only in supernatural, that is, unnatural, legends. To him Man, as he trod five-and-twenty centuries ago the banks of the obscure and marshy Tiber, was still so venerable and dear an image, that a whole laborious life might be well spent in tracing out his faintest footsteps, and deepening the slightest outlines of his story, till ages that seemed as completely lost as if they had belonged to some anterior planet, and whose place had for two thousand years been supplied by fantastic fables, stood again before us with the breath of life, and there, instead of a shapeless cloud, was Rome resurgent "in all her panoply." But it is less this result, with which we are now concerned, than the spirit of sincere faith, the feeling of the Worth of Man in his historical no less than his present existence, which makes Niebuhr so remarkable to us, and which has made his fellow historians and philologers a race so different from the earlier verbal pedants and all-believing devourers of old books. If the mythology and history, the thoughts and beliefs of the classical world, and especially of ancient Greece, have a living interest and coherent intelligible subsistence for us, we owe it to such men as Niebuhr, Wolf, Voss, K. O. Müller, who have penetrated with their sharp eyes and glowing enthusiasm into the tangled thorny fruitless wilderness, the sacred haunt of ghosts and schoolmasters.

Thus also is it with philosophy, which in England and France had long attempted little more than to explain away whatever is awful and divine in man, into something, if not mean and bad, yet small and frivolous. Our writers on such subjects, often with the best purpose, but ill-placed and stunted by the tendencies of the world they lived in, like their French contemporaries, only sought for the most part to analyse some separate faculty or thing that they found in man. The Germans took another road, made philosophy properly *constructive*, and sought to ascertain and consecrate laws around and above us, from which we and all things spring and become intelligible; and not merely to use the tools of the workshop within us in taking those tools to pieces. The aim of the Germans is at least the nobler one, and elevates, not dwarfs, the soul of him who makes them his masters. There is a godlike within us, that feels itself akin to the gods; and if we are told that both the godlike and the gods are dreams, we can but answer that so to dream is better than to wake and find ourselves nothing.

There is one remark, which reflections of this kind are almost certain to call forth in a large and respectable class of persons among us, viz., that to assert the Worth of Man is an arrogant delusion, and one that puffs up men with vanity. But this objection implies the absurd mistake of supposing that, the loftier the standard by which

we judge ourselves, the more and not the less nearly shall we seem to reach its full height. What is all that is held most holy,—what all the godlike men whom religious tradition canonizes and glorifies,—but forms of a divine idea, ever to be kept before us and approached, though in each individual most imperfectly realized? And when in other words we speak of the Worth of Man, which philosophy explains, history displays in action, and poetry sings of and makes visible to the soul, we but declare that there is a greatness of human nature, which rebukes the littleness of each, and yet is the common blessing and support of us all. It is not those that think most lowly of themselves, who will protest loudest against the asserters of the experienced and still possible Worth of Man. We have already sufficiently declared that we hold the great German writers to be the chief teachers of this lesson in the present age: and we wish nothing better than that our readers may not take our word for the fact, but examine it seriously for themselves. We believe no one ever thoughtfully studied these masters of modern thought, without finding in them more and more of what is best for all men.

POEMS BY ALFRED TENNYSON.

(From the Quarterly Review for 1842.*)*

WHAT poetry might be in our time and land, if a man of the highest powers and most complete cultivation exercised the art among us, will be hard to say, until after the fact of such a man's existence. Waiting for this desirable event, we may at least see that poetry, to be for us what it has sometimes been among mankind, must wear a new form, and probably comprise elements hardly found in our recent writings, and impossible in former ones.

Of verses indeed, of every sort but the excellent, there is no want; almost all however so helpless in skill, so faint in meaning, that one might almost fancy the authors wrote metre from mere incapacity of expressing themselves in prose, —as boys at school make nonsense-verses, before they can construct a rational sentence. Yet it is plain that even our magazine stanzas, album sonnets, and rhymes in corners of newspapers, aim at the forms of emotion, and use some of the words in which men of genius have symbolized profound thoughts. The whole indeed is generally a lump of blunder and imbecility; but in the midst there is often some turn of cadence, some attempt at an epithet of more significance

and beauty, than perhaps a much finer mind would have hit on a hundred years ago. The crowds of stammering children are the offspring of an age that would fain teach them,—if it knew how, —a richer, clearer language than they can learn to speak.

It is hard in this state of things not to conceive that the time, among us at least, is an essentially unpoetic one,—one which, whatever may be the worth of its feelings, finds no utterance for them in melodious words.

Yet our age is not asleep. Great movements, various activities, are heard and seen on all sides. In the lowest department, that of mere mechanics, consider what fifteen years have done. It was only in the autumn of 1830, following close on the French three memorable days of July, that the Duke of Wellington opened the Manchester and Liverpool Railroad. The population of the busiest region on this earth were assembled round him, whom all acknowledged as the greatest man in England, at the inauguration of a new physical power, then felt to double the strength and swiftness of human beings. While, among myriads of gravely joyous faces, the new machines travelled at a speed matching that of eagles, the life of a great statesman shot off on a darker and more distant journey; and the thrill of fear and pain at his destruction gave the last human tragic touch to an event which would at any rate have

retained for ever an historic importance. The death of Mr. Huskisson startled the fixed bosom of the veteran soldier; and those who were near perceived a quiver of the lip, a movement of the eye, such as had hardly been caused by the most unlooked-for and dreadful chances of his mighty wars. To a calm observer the emotion of the whole multitude, great and small, might strangely have recalled far distant ages, and the feelings with which ancient peoples held every great event as incomplete, wanting the blood of a victim,—too often human,—solemnly shed. In the most prosperous and peaceful of national triumphs the dark powers again claimed a share, and would not be forgotten.

Since then about twelve years have passed; and behold what they have brought forth. Some seventy millions of money have been expended,—more, at the lowest estimate, than four times as much as the Papacy was able to raise in a century and a half for the construction of its greatest monument, the costliest the world has ever seen. These seventy millions of pounds have been subscribed by private persons at their own choice in one small country, and have created nearly fifteen hundred miles of railroads,—structures that surpass all pyramids and Cyclopean walls, and machines that would puzzle Archimedes, by which myriads of men are perpetually travelling like the heroes of fairy tales. It is probable

that the roads of the Roman empire, the work of many centuries, did not cost so much of human labour,—and they certainly did not exhibit so much greatness of thought,—as those that we have built in less than twenty years. In the state of society that has produced such results there may be, we know there is, enough torpor, even rottenness. But it cannot be on the whole an insignificant stage of human existence, one barren for imaginative eyes.

Or look at one of our general elections. The absurdities are plain, no doubt: has not the ocean froth and bubbles? But take the thing altogether, and observe the mixture and spread of interests and faculties brought into action,—above all, the open boldness with which a nation throws itself into the streets and markets, casting off, in the faith that it can reproduce, its company of rulers, and letting the fools clamour, the poor groan, the rich humble themselves, and all men bring all to judgement, without a moment's fear but that quiet will spring out of the tumult, and a government be born from a mob. From the castle of the highest peer to the clay-stained tipplers in the alehouse, from the bench of bishops to the ranters in the moor-side smithy, all are stirred and fluttered, feverish with the same anxieties, debating in their different dialects the same questions, and all alike dependent on the omnipotence of an event which no man can absolutely

control. Most of what they say is folly; most of their objects of hope and fear chimeras: but how full of throbbing business is the whole land! how braced are all the wishes and devices of all! Among so much of make-believe and sound, it is a great thing that the whole country must at least be willingly deceived, if it is to be gained over,—must seem to itself rationally persuaded; and that the most futile pretender can only cheat by aping, and so strengthening in others, the qualities in which he is most deficient. At the blast of the newsmen's tin trumpets all shadows must walk out of their darkness into sunshine, and there be tried; when, if many of the umbratile fraudulently pass muster, there is at least a public recognition of the laws of light.

Not merely is there a debate and seeming adjudication in every country-town on all matters over the whole globe, which any tailor or brazier may choose to argue; but at last the tailor's and the brazier's voice does really influence the course of human affairs. The vote of the cobbler in an alley turns the poll for a candidate; the vote of the member gains the triumph of his party; and the success of his party decides on every question of peace or war over the globe, makes commercial treaties with Abyssinia, creates a white commonwealth among the savages of the Pacific Ocean, sends armaments to Pekin, and raises or lowers the price of silk grown among the Druses of

Lebanon, and of opium sold on the frontiers of Tartary. Within a year after the election in an English village, its result is felt in the more or less cost of food and clothes in Kaffer huts, and in the value of the copper saucepan trafficked at Timbuctoo for palm-oil and black babies. This is not a vapid, insubstantial political existence for the mass of men, not one devoid of topics and emotions, however little they may hitherto have been used in any books but those of statistics and trade.

Or glance at the matter in another of its phases. In the midmost rush of London business, and all the clatter of its vehicles, turn aside through an open door, and what do we see? A large and lofty room, every yard of its floor and galleries crammed with human, chiefly female life,—a prodigious sea of bonnets, and under each of these a separate sentient sea of notions, and feelings, and passions, all in some measure stirred by the same tides and gales,—every one of them, however narrow at the surface, in depth unfathomable.

Altogether irrespectively of our present purpose, and on the most general grounds, it may be safely said that in one of these great Exeter Hall meetings there is more to strike us than almost anywhere else we know. The room is said to hold four thousand persons; and from its form they are all clearly visible at once,—all of the middle or upper classes, well dressed, though often

many of them in Quaker uniform, and at these times probably three-fourths of them women. Such assemblages are in truth, for a large part of the members, by far the most exciting outward events of life. The faces themselves are alone quite enough to prove no small share of moral culture in the mass. The delicately curved mouths and nostrils, the open yet quiet and observant eyes, and a look of serious yet pleasurable elevation, mark very clearly a chosen class of our country. The men are of course less pure and single in their stamp of feeling: business has marked on them its contractedness, with its strength. Yet these also have an appearance of thought, although with some coxcombical importance and complacent theological primness. Take however the whole assemblage, all it is and all it represents; we know not where anything like it could be discovered. No Roman Catholic, no despotic, no poor, no barbarous, no thoroughly demoralized, we fear we must add, no very instructed and well organized community could ever exhibit such a gathering,—voluntary be it remembered, chiefly female, all with money to spare, united for such remote and often fantastic objects; above all, under such leaders. For in the kind of persons guiding these bodies, and in their discourse, consists more than half the wonder. In the House of Commons, in the Courts of Law, we may hear nonsense enough.

But in these places it is not the most vehement, the most chimerical,—in other words, the most outrageous and silly, who bear the chiefest sway, but much the contrary. Now in such Strand-Meetings, for the purest and noblest purposes, it is plain enough that a loud tongue, combined with a certain unctuous silkiness of profession, and the most dismal obscuration of brain, may venture with success upon the maddest assertions, the most desperate appeals, and will draw sighs and even tears of sympathy, by the coarsest nonsense, from hundreds of amiable and thoughtful persons dieted at home on Cowper, Fenelon, Wordsworth, and tuned to Nature's softest melodies. The carrier's horse (or was it ass?) that could draw inferences, is but a brute symbol of the spoken stuff that at religious meetings can draw admiration from the finest female bosoms. Such is the charm of twilight meanings and monstrous images, used in behalf of some remote and generous object, and strengthened by the oneness of feeling in a multitude of accordant hearts. Very strange it is to witness the single thrill of some two thousand bonnets, to hear the deep long sigh from as many warm and gentle breasts, all inspired by the raving folly of some declaimer, or by the gravely numerical statements of moral facts as to distant countries, proceeding from ill-informed and well-paid agents, and which those who know their falsity are sure enough not to

seek the odium of refuting. The sure tact of goodness leads the greater part of the hearers right in home concerns, but has no measure of probability for new experiments in remote lands. The faith which lives in the Infinite and Eternal, and is perpetually baffled in its search among present things, adds joyfully its charms, the transcendent element of all romance, to the faintest glimpse between distant clouds, and feels it a duty and delight to believe in the realized visions of credulous fancy.

Yet who can think without a certain approval of the immense annual revenue, larger than that of some continental kingdoms, raised by these marvellous addresses to our best feelings? Who can compare, without some admiration mixed in his contempt, the coarse and brainless weakness of the talk on these occasions, with the honest virtue, the moral elegance of heart, in those whom it influences? Or who that lives in England can be unaware that very many among the auditors of these brazen mouth-pieces show, in the whole course of their private lives, and in hard stern trials of all kinds, a simple self-forgetting nobleness and truth, beautifully contrasted with the ostentatious emptiness of the charitable melodrame?

On the whole, the country in which these varieties of good and evil are found mixed on such a scale, can hardly be considered in a state of life-

less inertness. Its want cannot be of themes and interest, but rather of those able to seize what lies before them, and turn it to right imaginative use. For every one indeed knows that all our activities, mechanical, political, missionary, celestial, or diabolical, are the immediate outgrowths of the human beings engaged in such matters, and might be found with much more inside and beneath them in the hearts and lives of the individuals. This is all the poet requires: a busy, vigorous, various existence is the matter *sine quâ non* of his work. All else comes from within, and from himself alone. Now, strangely as our time is racked and torn, haunted by ghosts, and errant in search of lost realities, poor in genuine culture, incoherent among its own chief elements, untrained to social facility and epicurean quiet, yet unable to unite its means in pursuit of any lofty blessing, half-sick, half-dreaming, and whole-confused,—he would be, not only misanthopic, but ignorant, who should maintain it to be a poor, dull, and altogether helpless age, and not rather one full of great through conflicting energies, seething with high feelings, and struggling towards the light with piercing though still hooded eyes. The fierce, too often mad force, that wears itself away among the labouring poor, the manifold skill and talent and unwearied patience of the middle classes, and the still unshaken solidity of domestic life among them,—these are facts open to all,

though by none perhaps sufficiently estimated. And over and among all society the wealth of our richer people is gathered and diffused, as it has never been before anywhere else, shaping itself into a thousand arts of luxury, a million modes of social pleasure, which the moralist may have much to object against, but which the poet, had we a truly great one now rising among us, would well know how to employ for his own purposes.

Then too, if we reflect that the empire and nation seated here, as in its centre, and at home so moving and multifarious, spreads its dominions all round the globe, daily sending forth its children to mix in the life of every race of man, seek adventures in every climate, and fit themselves to every form of polity, or it to them,—whereafter they return in body, or at least reflect their mental influences among us,—it cannot be in point of diversity and meaning that Britain disappoints any one capable of handling what it supplies.

See how Chaucer exhibits to us all that lay around him, the roughness and ignorance, the honour, faith, fancy, joyousness of a strong mind and a strong age, both tranquil within bounds, which, as large enough for their uses, neither had tried to pass. How strikingly for us are those grating contrasts of social condition harmonized by the home-bred feeling, that men, as they then were, had the liberty and space they then needed; the king and priest the all-sufficient guides of

men's higher life, and all powers and even wishes finding ample room, each within the range marked out by custom! Every figure is struck off by as clear and cutting a stroke as that of a practised mower with his scythe:—and of all these peculiarities of character,—so blended in that world are strength and unconsciousness,—not one ever rises into individuality of principle. In clearness, freedom, fulness, what delineation of our actual life can be at all compared with this? Of this poet how truly may it be said,

> O'er Chaucer's blithe old world, for ever new,
> In noon's broad sunbeam shines the morning dew;
> And while tired ages float in shade away,
> Unwearied glows with joy that clear to-day.

In Shakspere again, who never meant anything of the kind, that period, with its far deeper wants and more abundant forces, all lies softly, firmly drawn by every random jotting of his pen. For that, with all his unmatched reflectiveness, much was thus lightly done, seems no less certain at the hundredth perusal, than obvious at the first. The stately courtesies and consecrated forms of the past, all still untroubled,—but a new spirit rising within those antique walls, and as yet professing peaceful reverence, though it must one day shake them down; the heaven-storming imagination still toiling and sporting on the ground; the aimless bravery of knighthood still wearing its blazon of the starry cross, but going forth on real adventures

for the conquest of our actual earth in East and West; thought blending, though almost unmarked, with all the romance of passion; and fancy, no longer gathering flowers and strewing them in childish sport, but weaving them into garlands for victorious conscience, and using them for the charactery of knowledge: all this is undeniably there, though unintended, and only because the great mind of that and all time necessarily comprised and reproduced whatever was essential in his age. Ranks were still apart, customs unquestioned, forms holy, and natural truth and wisdom only the uncanonical, but inevitable comment, by which men undesignedly interpreted the page of prescription. And he who has best shown us all this, as it truly was, yet sent forth at every breath a fiery element, of which he was himself scarce concious, that should some day kindle and burn much still dear and venerable to him.

A gulf of generations lies between us and him; and the world is all changed around his tomb. But whom have we had to feel and express, like this man, the secret of our modern England, and to roll all out before him the immense reality of things, as his own small embroidered carpet, on which he merely cared to sit down at his ease and smoke his pipe?

There have been but two writers among us, whom every Englishman with a tincture of letters has read or heard of, aiming to shape poetically an

image of human life. These are of course Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron. But see how different their aim has been from such a one as we hint at. The elder poet, with his wholesome sense and clear felicity, has indeed given us much of human fact, and this, as it could not be otherwise, in the colours of the time he himself belonged to. But he has swayed the sympathies of the world in a great measure through their curiosity after the past, which he, more than all men in the annals of mankind, has taught us all to regard as alive and still throbbing in spirit, though its bones be turned to dust.

Byron has sought, through distance of place and foreign costume, the interest which Scott obtained from the strangeness of past ages; and it is but a small, though a profound and irrepressible part of our far-spread modern mind, that he has so well embodied in his scornful Harolds and despairing Giaours.

We have indeed one of his works, only one, which is a splendid attempt at a creative survey of modern life, and contains all the essential elements of such performance. And in spite of the puerile egotisms and dawdling prate into which the poem so often wanders, the first five cantoes of Don Juan, forming in point of bulk about a half, have more of fiery beauty and native sweetness in them, than anything we know of in our modern literature. There is also a wide range and keenness of obser-

vation; and were some trivialities struck out, as they so easily might be, no capital defect would remain, but the weakness of speculative culture visible in all Lord Byron's philosophical excursions. In the latter half of the poem, and unhappily when he is on English ground, the lax shapelessness of structure, the endless slipshod, yawny loungings, and vapid carelessness of execution, become very disagreeable, in spite of passages rich with imperishable beauty, wit, and vigour, such as no other modern Englishman or man could have approached. On the whole, with all its faults, moral and poetic, the earlier portion of this singular book will probably remain, like the first half of Faust, the most genuine and striking monument of a whole recent national literature. But the weakness as to all deeper thought, and the incomplete groundplan, place it somewhat lower than could be wished. And at best it is but one book, in an age that produces annual thousands.

Little therefore as is all that has been done towards the poetic representation of our time,—even in the looser and readier form of prose romance,—it is hard to suppose that it is incapable of such treatment. The still unadulterated purity of home among large circles of the nation presents an endless abundance of the feelings and characters, the want of which nothing else in existence can supply even to a poet. And these soft and steady lights strike an observer all the more, from

the restless activity and freedom of social ambition, the shifting changes of station, and the wealth gathered on one hand and spent on the other with an intenseness and amplitude of will, to which there is at least nothing now comparable among mankind. The power of self-subjection combined with almost boundless liberty, indeed necessitated by it, and the habit of self-denial with wealth beyond all calculation,—these are indubitable facts in modern England. But while recognised as facts, how far do they still remain from that development as thoughts, which philosophy desires, or that vividness as images, which is the aim of poetry! It is easy to say that the severity of conscience in the best minds checks all play of fancy, and the fierceness of the outward struggle for power and riches absorbs the energies that would otherwise exert themselves in shapeful melody. But had we minds full of the idea and the strength requisite for such work, they would find in this huge, harassed, and luxurious national existence the nourishment, not the poison, of creative art. The death-struggle of commercial and political rivalry, the brooding doubt and remorse, the gas-jet flame of faith irradiating its own coal-mine darkness,—in a word, our overwrought materialism fevered by its own excess into spiritual dreams,—all this might serve the purposes of a bold imagination, no less than the creed of the antipoetic Puritans became poetry in the mind of Milton;

and all bigotries, superstitions, and gore-dyed horrors were flames that kindled steady light in Shakspere's humane and meditative song.

Of all our recent writers, the one who might seem at first sight to have most nearly succeeded in this quest after the poetic *Sangreal* is Crabbe. No one has ranged so widely through all classes, employed so many diverse elements of circumstance and character. But nowhere, or very, very rarely, do we find in him that eager sweetness, a fiery spirituous essence, yet bland as honey, wanting which all poetry is but an attempt more or less laudable, and, after all, a failure. Shooting arrows at the moon, one man's bow shoots higher than another's; but the shafts of all alike fall back to earth, and bring us no light upon their points. It needs a strange supernatural power to achieve the impossible, and fix the silver shaft within the orb, that shoots in turn its rays of silver back into our human bosoms.

Crabbe is always an instructive and forceful, almost always even an interesting writer. His works have an imperishable value as records of his time; and it may even be said that few parts of them but would have found an appropriate place in some of the reports of our various commissions for inquiring into the state of the country. Observation, prudence, acuteness, uprightness, self-balancing vigour of mind are everywhere seen, and are exerted on the whole wide field of com-

mon life. All that is wanting is the enthusiastic sympathy, the jubilant love, whose utterance is melody, and without which all art is little better than a laborious ploughing of the sand, and then sowing the sand itself for seed along the fruitless furrow.

In poetry we seek, and find, a refuge from the hardness and narrowness of the actual world. But using the very substance of this Actual for poetry, its positiveness, shrewdness, detailedness, incongruity, and adding no new peculiar power from within, we do no otherwise than if we should take shelter from rain under the end of a roof-spout.

To Mr. Wordsworth of course these remarks on Crabbe would be by no means applicable. Yet even he has exhibited only one limited, however lofty region of life, and has made it far less his aim to represent what lies around him by means of self-transference into all its feelings, than to choose therefrom what suits his spirit of ethical meditation, and so compel mankind, out alike of their toilsome daily paths and pleasant nightly dreams, into his own severe and stately school of thought. The present movements of human life, nay its varied and spontaneous joys, to him are little, save so far as they afford a text for a mind, in which fixed will, and stern speculation, and a heart austere and measured even in its pity, are far more obvious powers than fancy, emotion, or keen and versatile sympathy. He

discourses indeed with divine wisdom of life and nature, and all their sweet and various impulses; but the impression of his own great calm judicial soul is always far too mighty for any all-powerful feeling of the objects he presents to us. In his latest volume there is a poem with the date of 1803, *At the Grave of Burns,* full of *reflective* tenderness. But it is noticeable that even here Burns is interesting, not for his own sake, and in his own splendid personality, but with reference to Mr. Wordsworth's mind, and the effect of the peasant's poetry on him. We are glad indeed to have any pretext for citing this beautiful stanza (p. 53):

> Well might I mourn that he was gone,
> Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
> When, breaking forth as Nature's own,
> It show'd my youth,
> How verse may build a princely throne
> On humble truth.

In thus pointing to the problem which poetry now holds out, and maintaining that it has been but partially solved by our most illustrious writers, there is no design of setting up an unattainable standard, and then blaming any one in particular for inevitably falling short of it. Out of an age so diversified, and as yet so unshapely, he who draws forth any graceful and expressive forms is well entitled to high praise. Turning into fixed beauty any part of the shifting and mingled matter of our time, he does what in itself is very difficult, and affords very valuable

help to all his future fellow-labourers. If he has not given us back our age as a whole transmuted into crystalline clearness and lustre, a work accomplished only by a few of the greatest minds under the happiest circumstances for their art, yet we scarce know to whom we should be equally grateful as to him who has enriched us with any shapes of lasting loveliness, 'won from the vague and formless infinite.'

Mr. Tennyson has done more of this kind than almost any one that has appeared among us during the last twenty years. And in such a task of alchemy a really successful experiment, even on a small scale, is of great worth, compared with the thousands of fruitless efforts or pretences on the largest plan, which are daily clamouring for all men's admiration of their nothingness.

The first of these two volumes consists of republished poems, and may be regarded, we presume, as all that Mr. Tennyson wishes to preserve of his former editions. He has sifted in most cases his earlier harvests, and kept the better grain. There are some additions of verses and stanzas here and there, many minute changes, and also beneficial shortenings and condensations. The second volume however is on the whole far advanced in merit beyond the first. There is more clearness, solidity, and certainty of mind visible in it throughout: especially some of the blank-verse poems,—a style almost unattempted

in the earlier series,—have a quiet completeness and depth, a sweetness arising from the happy balance of thought, feeling, and expression, that ranks them among the riches of our recent literature.

The collection includes poems of four markedly different kinds: 1. The Idyllic, in which there is sometimes an epic calmness in representing some event or situation of private life, sometimes a flow of lyrical feeling, but still expanding itself in a narrative or description of the persons, events, and objects that fill the poet's imagination. 2. The purely Lyrical, — odes, songs, and the more rapid ballads, where the emotion is not only uppermost, but all in all, and the occasions and interests involved appear but casually and in hints. 3. Fancy pieces; those namely of which the theme is borrowed or imitated from conceptions of past ages now become extremely strange or quite incredible for us. In these the principal charm of the work can spring only from the vividness and grace of the imagery, the main idea making no direct impression on our feelings. 4. There is a class of Allegories, Moralities, didactic poems. We might add another, of Facetiæ; but in these the writer, though not unmeaning or without talent, seems far inferior to himself; and they happily fill but a small part of his pages.

The first and third of these classes,—the Idyls

and Fancies,—are, in our view, of the greatest merit, and differ in little but the stranger and more legendary themes of the latter series, while they resemble each other in a somewhat spacious and detailed style of description, with however an evident general predominance of personal feeling, sometimes masked by the substitution of an imaginary narrator for the real poet.

We shall speak first of the second class, which we have called Odes. *Claribel, Lilian, Isabel, Madeline, Adeline, Eleanore,* and *Margaret,*—all are raptures in honour of ladies. *Isabel* is similar in style and plan to the rest, but differs by being addressed to a matron, not a maiden; and though, like the others, euphuistic enough, and coldly ingenious, is pleasant as a relief from the unrealities of rhetorical sentiment. There is a beautiful idea in it,—with much verbal melody and many dainty phrases, far beyond the reach of any but a man of genius, however inaptly genius may be spent in dressing make-believe emotion swith far-fetched rhythmic ornament. *Claribel* is a sort of lament over a dead woman. The other young ladies seem to have the advantage of being still alive, but their poetic environment is not for that the less ghostly and preternatural. In all these pieces the will to write poetry seems to us to have supplied (insufficiently) the place of poetic feeling; though one sees that only a poet could have written them. The heroines are moonshine

maidens, in the number of whom Mr. Tennyson is really as unconscionable as Solomon or Mahomet. It may be suspected that neither the Arab prophet nor Jewish king would much have approved such questionable charms as *black-beaded* eyes and *crimson-threaded* lips. We of a more metaphysical generation grow heartily weary of the delicacies, and subtleties, and super-fineries of so many mysterious passions, and phantom objects, as carefully discriminated as varieties of insects by Ehrenberg, or fossils by Owen. The whole style smells of musk, and is not without glimpses of rouge and pearl-powder. We have found nothing here at once more distinct and graceful than the following lines; and these are marred by the two final epithets:

> His bowstring slackened, languid Love,
> Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
> Droops both his wings, regarding thee;
> And so would languish evermore,
> Serene, imperial Eleanore.

Of the poem 'To ——,' much need not be said. '*Clear-headed friend*' is the most ludicrously flat beginning of a serious poem that we have ever seen proceed from a real poet; and the construction of the final strophe is so obscure, that we have in vain attempted to disentangle it into any meaning. Yet few readers can be required to spend as much time on such a matter, as we are both bound and glad so to employ. In the

same verses '*kingly intellect*' is at least in that connection a phrase of vague rhetoric. The two little poems to the 'Owl' are at best ingenious imitations of the manner of some of Shakspere's and his contemporaries' songs; well done enough, but not worth doing.

The *Recollections of the Arabian Nights* is of a better kind. The writer does not in this seem painfully striving after topics, images, variations, and originalities, but writing from lively conception of a theme, which offered in abundance the material suited to his fancy and ear. The poem is at once brilliant and pleasing: but we may remark that its merit is of a kind which presents itself somewhat too easily to a reader of the tales it recalls; that there is little progress in imagery, and none in thought, beyond the first stanza, in all the following thirteen; and that some meaning adapted to our modern European brains might perhaps have been insinuated under those gorgeous eastern emblems without injury to their genuine Asiatic import. The gold and red arabesque repeats itself, square after square of the pattern, with undeniable splendour, but somewhat wearying monotony.

The *Ode to Memory* aims at a far higher sort of excellence. Had it preceded, instead of following Mr. Wordsworth's 'Platonic Ode,' it would have been a memorable poem. The elder poet's solemn rapture on the 'Recollections of

Childhood' is comparable in its way, to the Portland funeral vase, were that lighted, as it ought to be, from within; on a purple ground, dark as midnight, still and graceful snow-white figures, admitting of endless interpretations, all more or less fitting, but none perhaps conclusive. Mr. Tennyson has caught some of the same feeling, and much of the rhythm, but has not even earned what was still within his power, the praise of a greater variety and richness of painting, nor has precipitated with Shelleyan passion the stream that slept so calmly in Mr. Wordsworth's mountain-lake.

There could hardly be a more decisive proof of Mr. Tennyson's inaptitude for *Orphic* song than the last six lines of this poem.

> My friend, with thee to live alone,
> Methinks, were better than to own
> A crown, a sceptre, and a throne.
> O strengthen me, enlighten me!
> I faint in this obscurity,
> Thou dewy dawn of memory.

To tell Memory, the mystic prophetess, to whom in these transcendent initiations we owe all notices connecting our small individuality with the Infinite Eternal, that converse with her were better than crowns and sceptres! Memory might perhaps reply, 'My friend, if you have not, after encircling the universe, traversing the abyss of ages, and uttering more than a hundred lines,

forgotten that there are such toys on that poor earth as crowns and sceptres, it were better for you to be alone, not with, but without me.' Think how sublime a doctrine, that to have the beatific vision is really better than the power and pomp of the world. Philosophy, that sounds all depths, has seldom approached a deeper *bathos.*

Of the little poem called *Circumstance,* we shall quote the whole, pleased to find something that we can produce in support of our admiration for a large class of Mr. Tennyson's poems, on which we have not yet touched.

> Two children in two neighbour villages
> Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas;
> Two strangers meeting at a festival;
> Two lovers whispering by an orchard-wall;
> Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease;
> Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower,
> Wash'd with still rains, and daisy-blossomed;
> Two children in one hamlet born and bred:—
> So runs the round of life from hour to hour.

Much is not attempted here, but the more performed. How simple is the language! how quietly flowing the rhythm! how clear the images! and with what pleasant enigmatic openness do the few lines set before us all the little tale of the two villagers, playing, parted, meeting, loving, wedding, dying, and leaving behind them two orphan children! It is a small tone of natural feeling, caught and preserved with genuine art, and coming home to every bosom that sweet words can penetrate at all.

Fatima is of a far higher pitch, but seems oddly misnamed. It is full of true and vehement, yet musical passion; and it suggests the strong flow of Lesbian poetry, and particularly the well-known fragment of Sappho addressed to a woman. Whence then the name? Lesbos has hardly gained by becoming a part of Turkey, or Sappho by turning into Fatima. But the poem is beautiful: we scarcely know where in English we could find anything so excellent, as expressing the deep-hearted fulness of a woman's conscious love. Many will read it, as if it belonged only to some Fatima or Sappho to feel with this entireness of abandonment. But there are hundreds of women in the West end of London,—and in the East end too,—who would find it only a strain that nature had already taught them.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere aims at less, and though of no very rare cast, is successful in all that it attempts. Mr. Tennyson seems to have intended to be very severe in this remonstrance to a flirt. But the damsel who deserved it would certainly have been rather flattered than provoked by such a tribute to her powers.

The Blackbird, The Death of the Old Year, and *Edward Gray,* are all sufficiently good for publication, but not for detailed criticism. *Sir Launcelot* and *Queen Guinevere* is of similar tone, but not extraordinary merit. The last but one appears to be the best stanza.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
On mosses thick with violet,
Her cream-white mule his pastern set;
And now more fleet she skimmed the plains,
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
With jingling bridle-reins.

In one less careful of his melody,—and we have few very recent writers so successfully careful of it,—we should hardly make any remark on the harsh *r's* in these latter lines, so unsuitable to the vague and gliding fluency of the image.

Under the head of FANCIES we class all those poems relating to distant and marvellous circumstances and persons, such as we can only conceive, and that very imperfectly, by a conscious removal of our thoughts into regions of which we have no experience, and which seem to us half impossible. In some instances the poet only attempts to reproduce outward relations of society, and a kind of feeling, which have departed from our common life,—as in *The Sisters*, *The Beggar Maid*, *St. Simeon*, and *St. Agnes*. In others, and the greater number of these pieces, he rushes away with us into the ruins and sepulchres of old supernatural beliefs,—dear to him however, not as still partly credible, or as having ever been sacred and awful to mankind, but for the graceful strangeness of the figures that they

suggest and are linked with. This mythological poetry is not of equal interest and difficulty with that which produces as brilliant and deep effects from the ordinary realities of our own lives. But it is far from worthless. Some German ballads of this kind by Goethe and Schiller,—nay, by Bürger and by Heine,—have great power over every one, from the art with which the imagination is won to accept as true what we still feel to be so strange. This is done mainly by a potent use of the mysterious relation between man and nature, and between all men towards each other, which always must show itself on fitting occasions as the visionary, the ominous, the spectral, the 'eery' and awful consciousness of a supernatural somewhat within our own homely flesh. It appears to us that Mr. Tennyson has neither felt so deeply as some other poets,—Coleridge, for instance, in *Christabel*,—the moral ground on which this oracular introsentient part of man is firmly built, nor has employed its phantasmagoric power with such startling witchery. But there is almost always a vivid elegance and inward sweetness in his elfin song, whether Gothic or Grecian; and he sometimes even uses the legends of Pagan antiquity with a high perfection of dreamy music.

The Dying Swan, *The Merman*, and *The Mermaid*, are figments which he has not connected with any feeling that could render us

willing to believe, nor with any meaning that would give them value as symbols. There is a kind of unhappy materialism in some of these attempts at spiritualizing nature; and in the midst of some beautiful images we are stopped short by fancies equally farsought and unpleasant; see for instance, vol. i. p. 73.

There are however hardly any of these legendary poems, that might not well be cited as examples of solid and luminous painting. We must admit that Mr. Tennyson has scarcely succeeded, perhaps has not tried, to unite any powerful impression on the feelings with his coloured blaze. It is painted,—though well-painted,—fire. But in animated pomp of imagery, all in movement, like a work of Paolo Veronese, few thing that we know could rival these compositions. His figures are distinct as those of brazen statuary on tombs, brilliant as stained glass, musical as the organ-tones of chapels. And as some of these romantic songs remind us of Paul Cagliari, others,—those especially that have been dreamt upon the lap of the Greek Muse,—are akin to the creations of a still greater painter than the Veronese, Correggio. So mild and mournful in interest are these, so perfect in harmony of images and rhythm, we almost grieve at last to wake from our trance, and find we have been deluded by a Pagan vision, and by the echoes of oracles now dumb. Scarcely fabled magic could be more successful. The effect

is the result evidently of great labour, but also of admirable art. As minstrel conjurations, perhaps in English *Kubla Khan* alone exceeds them. The verse is full of liquid intoxication, and the language of golden oneness. While we read, we too are wandering, led by nymphs, among the thousand isles of old mythology; and the present fades away from us into a pale vapour. To bewitch us with our own daily realities, and not with their unreal opposites, is a still higher task; but it could not be more thoroughly performed.

The *Morte d'Arthur*, the first poem in the second volume, seems to us less costly jewel-work, with fewer of the broad flashes of passionate imagery, than some others, and not compensating for this inferiority by any stronger human interest. The miraculous legend of *Excalibur* does not come very near to us, and, as reproduced by any modern writer, must be a mere ingenious exercise of fancy. The poem however is full of distinct and striking description perfectly expressed; and a tone of mild, dignified sweetness attracts, though it hardly avails to enchant us. The poet might perhaps have made the loss of the magic sword, the death of Arthur, and dissolution of the Round Table, a symbol for the departure from earth of the whole old Gothic world, with its half-pagan, all-poetic faith, and rude yet mystic blazonries. But it would be tyrannical exaction to require more philosophy, in union with so fiery and productive

a fancy. No one but Coleridge among us has ever combined a thoroughly speculative intellect with so restless an abundance of beautiful imagery as we find in Mr. Tennyson; and the younger minstrel has as much of the reflection proper to an age like ours, as any living poet except Mr. Wordsworth, and as any but a very few deceased ones.

The gift of comprehensive thoughtfulness does not however show itself to advantage in *St. Simeon Stylites*, a kind of monological personation of a filthy and mad ascetic. We find exhibited, with the seriousness of bitter poetic irony, his loathsome, yet ridiculous attempts at saintship, all founded on an idea of the Divinity, fit only for an African worshiping a scarecrow fetish, made of dog's bones, goose-feathers, and dunghill-rags. This is no topic for Poetry: she has better tasks than to wrap her mantle round a sordid, greedy lunatic.

How different, how superior is *Ulysses!* There is in this work a delightful epic tone, and a clear unimpassioned wisdom, quietly carving its sage words and graceful figures on pale but lasting marble. Yet we know not why, except from schoolboy recollections, a modern English poet should write of Ulysses, rather than of the great voyagers of the modern world, Columbus, Gama, or even Drake. Their feelings and aims lie far nearer to our comprehension,—reach us by a far shorter line. Even of *Godiva*, different as is the

theme, a similar observation holds. It also is admirably well done; but the singularity and barbarousness of the fact spur, no doubt, the fancy, even told in plain prose, yet are far from rendering the topic favourable for poetry. The *Day-Dream*, the old and pretty tale of the *Sleeping Beauty*, is open to no such objection. Here the poetry was made to the writer's hand; and one cannot but wish that his grace, liveliness, and splendour had been employed on a matter of his own invention*; or, if borrowed, of some more earnest meaning. Yet, as graceful and lively description, as truth playing behind the mask of fairy-tale, the whole poem is most agreeable.

The poems which we would class under the head MORALITIES, in which Reflection lifts the rod to silence Feeling, are scattered up and down the volumes under various titles. They almost all appear to us decided and remarkable failures, and only one or two of the shorter and slighter at all worthy of Mr. Tennyson.

The Palace of Art indeed has the tints and force of poetry, and shows the author's characteristic power of distinct and deeply-dyed painting. But

* It is difficult to suppose that the poem was written before the exhibition of Mr. Maclise's picture of *The Sleeping Beauty* (1841),—a work displaying, like most of that rising artist's, great wealth and boldness of fancy and execution, but, like too many both of the paintings and the poems of our day, too ambitiously crowded, and forced and glaring in its περιεργια.

there is considerable affectation in some of the groupings both of words and things; and what is worse, the meaning, the *morality*, is trivial, and even mistaken. The writer's doctrine seems to be, that the soul, while by its own energy surrounding itself with all the most beautiful and expressive images that the history of mankind has produced, and sympathizing wholly with the world's best thoughts, is perpetrating some prodigious moral offence, for which it is bound to repent in sackcloth and ashes. A more rational, and not less religious view would seem to be, that we should repent of the errors we commit from the *in*activity of our higher powers and feelings. We hardly know a notion worthier of Simeon [Stylites], or of some crack-brained sot repenting in the stocks, than this doctrine that the use of our noblest faculties on their right objects is an outrage against our best duties. Happily Mr. Tennyson's practice is wiser than the theory propounded in this piece; and his theory itself, if we may judge from the doctrinal parts of his second and more mature volume, is also much improved. The long and dull production called *the Two Voices*, a dispute on immortality, adding nothing to our previous knowledge, and of which the substance might have been better given in three pages (or one) than thirty, has yet no such folly in it as the many-coloured mistake of *the Palace of Art*.

In all Mr. Tennyson's didactic writing one sees

too clearly that, unless when the Image enchains his heart, the Thought has far too little hold upon him to produce any lively movement of soul. His speculations have the commonplaceness, vagueness, and emptiness of dreams, though the dreams of genius; and hopefully do we trust that the poet will not again throw off his magic mantle either for the monkish gown or the stoic robe.

We have now reached that class of poems which stand first in our list, and which we have entitled IDYLS. We have reserved till now all special mention of them, as holding them the most valuable part of Mr. Tennyson's writings, a real addition to our literature. They have all more or less of the properly Idyllic character, though in three or four of them marked with the rapid and suggestive style of the ballad. In all we find some warm feeling, most often love, a clear and faithful eye for visible nature, skilful art and completeness of construction, and a mould of verse which for smoothness and play of melody has seldom been equalled in the language. The heartfelt tenderness, the glow, the gracefulness, the strong sense, the lively painting, in many of these compositions, drawn from the heart of our actual English life, set them far above the glittering marvels and musical phantasms of Mr. Tennyson's mythological romances, at first sight the most striking portion of his works.

Among the happier specimens of this class two

are pre-eminent, *the Gardener's Daughter*, and *Dora*. These are both of them Idyls in the strictest sense of the term, and might rank with the eclogues of Theocritus and Virgil, and with some poems of Goethe,—as anecdotes drawn from rustic life and rounded into song. As compared with the antique models, we see in them all the gain that Christianity and civilization have brought to the relation of the sexes, and to the characters of women.

The Gardener's Daughter is a husband's recollection of his successful love, the object of which has been withdrawn from him by death. The unrhymed verse has a quietfulness of sound, and all the delineation a clear yet rich completeness of truth, that render the little work, though far from the loftiest, yet one of the most delightful we know.

Dora, though not so luxuriously beautiful, has less, indeed nothing, that could be spared without serious loss.

Audley Court, and *Walking to the Mail*, are in a lighter style, and with less of interest. *The Talking Oak* is more important, but does not satisfy us so well. This also, like most of Mr. Tennyson's better poems, is love-inspired and love-breathing. But an ancient oak, that is won by a poet to utter Dodonæan oracles, would hardly be so prolix and minute in its responses. In *Locksley Hall* the fancy is again at home. It is

perhaps on the whole the one of all these poems, in which far-extended thought is best involved in genuine and ardent imagination. A quick and generous heart pours out through the lips of a young man, who has been deceived by the woman he loved, and who, inflamed with disappointment, reviews at passionate speed,—far unlike the prosaic slowness of professional reviewers,—the images that the darkened world now presents to him, and the diverse paths of action that he is tempted to try. We know not what the author means by his hero's talk of comrades and bugle-horns; for all the rest is the direct outbirth and reflection of our own age.

Lady Clare is not memorable. *The Lord of Burleigh* is an example of the skill with which a poet can find a true and complete imaginative interest in an anecdote of our actual refined life.

Every thoughtful reader of the poems which we have thus glanced through, will be led to compare them with those on similar themes, of present human existence in the country, by the most profoundly reflective of our living poets, Mr. Wordsworth. *Michael, the Brothers,* the story of Margaret in the beginning of *the Excursion, Ruth,*—these also are English Idyls, drawn from the well-springs of Nature, and finished with the painful care of a great artist. How naked and bare they all are in their solemn stillness! Nor

is it only in these poems, but even in works of lighter and gladder movement, that we are compelled to listen to the bard as to a grave teacher of moral truth, whom the spirit of spontaneous enjoyment, and even the sympathy with whatever is pathetic or grand in man, cannot hurry beyond the school of his compassionate but austere stoicism. Ignorance only, or lunacy, could deny him a deep internal power of true poetry. But even this, and not merely the manly passions and the soft affections, even the shaping and inspired imagination itself, is always subject to the considerate dominion of the moral idea. *Emotion*, the most general and obvious, the necessary impulse of all poetry in every age, is restrained in all his writings by the awful presence of self-centred will. The feelings are described, rather than shared; the tragic passions summoned up, only to be rebuked by a more solemn conjuration than their own; the free enjoyment of life and nature approved only within the bounds of unrelaxing caution; and love,—the name bubbled by every wave of Hippocrene, and thundered in all the floods and storms of the main ocean of our being,—is here a grave ritual sound, spoken over the still waters drawn from the well of Truth for a penitential baptism.

Of course it would be far from our design to charge this great writer with want of feeling. A poet without feeling! Fire without warmth! and

a heart without pulsation! But it is clear that his feelings are always strictly watched by his meditative conscience, too strictly, not for wisdom, but for rapture. Not a prophet in the wilderness lifting up his testimony against an evil generation,—for the heart of the seer must be red and fierce as molten iron,—not a hermit in his cave retired from human joys,—for the anchorite floats above his rocky floor, forgetful of laws and retributions, in an ecstasy of self-denying love, that supplies the place of decalogue and duties,—but, like the prophet and the monk, this poet turns aside from the busy ways of life to speculate, in sage and sometimes awful rhetoric, on the wondrousness of existence, and the care with which we must tend the purity of its fountain in the heart. There is no face so lovely, no act so gushing over with keen life, that can kindle at once the minstrel into song, hurrying him beyond all thought of wrong and right, and having warrant enough in the zealous heat which it inspires. Only in communion with the stars, the mountains, and the sea, the flowers of spring, and autumn leaves, and all the simple mysteries of natural things, does his heart pour without pause a stream of melodious gladness, and fear no danger in its own happy ecstasies. Even in these solemn elevations of soul, he does not forget to impose a scheme of toils on human life. Among streams and rocks he begins with discourse of virtue; and when

he has risen on the ladder of his vision to the stars, we still hear him singing from the solar way, that it is by temperance, soberness, and chastity of soul he has so climbed, and that the praise of this heroic discipline is his last message to mankind. A noble temper of heart! A truly great man! He has strangely wedded his philosophic lore to the sweetness of poetry. But the poetry would have streamed out in a freer gush, and flushed the heart with ampler joy, had the moral been less *obtruded* as its constant aim.

In the younger of these two idyllic writers, on the whole the most genial poet of English rural life that we know,—for Burns was of another language and country, no less than school,—there is a very different stamp of soul. In his works there has been art enough required and used to give clear and graceful roundness; but all skill of labour, all intellectual purpose, kept behind the sweet and fervid impulse of the heart. Thus all that we call affection, imagination, intellect, melts out as one long happy sigh into union with the visibly beautiful, and with every glowing breath of human life. In all his better poems there is this same character,—this fusion of his own fresh feeling with the delightful affections, baffled or blessed, of others,—and with the fairest images of the real world, as it lies before us all to-day. To this same tendency all legend and mystery are subordinate: to this the under-

standing, theorizing and dogmatizing, ever ministers, a loyal giant to a fairy mistress. In his better and later works the fantastic and ingenious brain, abounding in gold-dust and diamond-powder, and the playmate of sphinxes and hieroglyphic beasts, pours out its wealth, and yokes its monsters, only for the service of that homely northern nature, without whose smile all wealth is for us but dead stones, and all mysteries but weary tasklike puzzles.

THE WORTH OF KNOWLEDGE:

AN INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

DELIVERED AT THE FALMOUTH POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTION,

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1842.

THE WORTH OF KNOWLEDGE.

IN coming before you, my friends, this evening, let me remind you that I am but one of several persons among your neighbours, who, acting certainly with no view to any object but your advantage, hope they may be able to diffuse some interesting knowledge among this community. In appearing as the first of those engaged in this enterprise, I am fulfilling the wish of others, not my own, and therefore trust that I shall not be considered as alone responsible for great and inevitable imperfections in a task that I never should have chosen. But I must not add to my other offences that of wearying you with any further apology.

In beginning these Lectures it seemed important to bring before you such considerations as might awaken some thoughtful interest in our purpose, and might give you some clear and, if possible, some comprehensive notion of the business that we have in hand.

But it did not appear advisable to renew in your ears the incessant doctrine of our day, true as no doubt it is, that knowledge is highly con-

venient for the practical purposes of life, and enables us to work tin-mines with more profit, and tan shoe-leather with more success, than could be expected from unlettered barbarians. The fact is undeniable. But it is also evident; and those who do not learn it from hourly experience and observation, could hardly be convinced by any verbal exposition, even could such be given from this place as delightfully as in the elegant and instructive volume of Sir John Herschel on Natural Philosophy.

But the cultivated man is distinguished from the boor or savage quite as much by his habitual systematic love of Knowledge as by the share of it that he possesses. He feels that the use of Knowledge to spice our broth and line our coats is but a small part of the claim that it maintains on the settled enthusiasm of his soul.

To make men at once more earnest and more tolerant, to give them light in the recesses of their own bosoms, and to unfold before them the picture of Being which God's sunrise daily paints on the Canvas of Infinity, as all made up of bright immortal truth, to show that Knowledge is no light, frail, pleasant diversion, but the one needful food, the Heaven-commanded bread and wine of every human spirit,—this is the main purpose that we ought to have in view. The great question is, how may this best be accomplished?

For our object this evening it might seem desirable to lay before you some rapid survey of human knowledge as a whole, of the various departments into which it may most fitly be divided, of the progress hitherto made in each of these, of the connection of each with the others and the whole, and of the comparative claims they severally make on the attention of a reasonable mind. This would have been perhaps useful and striking, even very imperfectly performed. We might have shown how there is one great series of truths, beginning in the physical world, and ending in the highest animal organizations and their minute and dull intelligence; another and more deeply attractive series in the knowledge of Man, of his bodily structure, and his relations to physical nature, and thence onward his higher powers and history; and a third region of thought, the most comprehensive of all, in which the Intellect whereby we know is no longer the means only, but itself also the object of our inquiries, and we consider knowledge and all its powers and empire as a connected whole,—Science in its purity, or Philosophy most properly so called.

To the first of these studies belongs Physical Science generally, and all its applications in the useful arts. Herein we deal with Light, Heat, Electricity, Magnetism—all the insensitive, invariable forces which combine to build and per-

petuate this outward universe. They seem, under the pressure of modern inquiry, gradually resolving themselves into fewer and larger forms of existence, and showing how the increasing number of phenomena we know are accounted for by simpler, more comprehensive laws, than we were before acquainted with. To this range of study belong also Chymistry, Mineralogy, Geology, and Astronomy, sciences which treat of the material aggregates around us so far as these are not organized. Lastly, we must place here the knowledge of Plants and Animals, in both of which classes a Life akin to our own more or less feebly shows itself, rising from the almost invisible moss, the slight embroidery on this immeasurable bulk of things, to the fulness of brute mind in the dog, the ape, and the elephant.

In the circle of human facts we should have to include those which form the basis, firstly of Physiology, dealing with our bodily life and structure, and secondly of Psychology, or the powers and laws of the human mind. Then, and connected with these, Politics, Morals, and Religion, the Beautiful Arts, and Arithmetic, Geometry, and Logic; all, in fine, that goes to make up man, independent of a distinct and comprehensive Philosophy.

The third, and by far the most arduous and noblest of all kinds of Science, is that which regards human nature not as affording but as

possessing knowledge, as a Being empowered to know. This study of knowledge as a whole, of what certainty it supplies and how, of the methods to be pursued in searching for it, of the connection of all its results, and the places they occupy with regard to each other, is Philosophy proper. It is Universal and Fundamental Science. We owe the very idea of it to the Greeks, who therein built the eternal Lighthouse of Thought, leaving to us as an endless duty to improve and feed the lamps, and to strengthen and enlarge the outworks and foundations of the pile.

The rules of practical life supply to most persons an outward guidance; and the imagination, feelings, and conscience an inward faith. But if we are to propose to ourselves as a distinct problem for the Reason, to settle what we can and what we do know, and how we know anything certainly, and what insight this knowledge affords into our nature and destiny,—it is Philosophy, the golden tablet inscribed with imperishable hieroglyphics, Philosophy, the Sibylline Queen of our existence, from which we must learn to solve these aching doubts, and soar into this cloudless truth.

To sketch an outline of all our knowledge, such as has been now suggested, would, in the abstract, seem the fittest mode of opening a series of inquiries into the various matters which several teachers propose to bring before you. But on

a large part of this field of Thought, more than half at the very least, I have no attainments that would enable me to say anything at all satisfactory. Moreover such a dissertation would have been unintelligible to the greater part of my hearers. The young, the busy, the timidly seeking rather than boldly thorough-going, and all who have not received an education at once large and finished, would perhaps be rather bewildered than helped by speculations of the compass and difficulty now pointed out.

But there is another argument, and a stronger one if possible than these, against any such attempt. It is this, that for all but a few persons in this country the general point of view in which all knowledge ought to be regarded, is no less obscure than the distinctions and relations between the several regions of our intelligence, and than the grounds, limits, and prerogatives of the Intellect. It is therefore my wish to impress upon you these two truths: first, that Knowledge is an inseparable ideal Whole in itself most worthy of human interest: secondly, that our age is one when all civilized men ought to be made aware of this principle, and will find in it the most unfailing, though not the liveliest and loudest help amid the distractions and mischiefs of the world. It is not too bold to say that the hour of your attention and the many hours of my labour will all have been worthily

employed, if the meaning of this doctrine can be brought home to the apprehension even of one or two not before impressed with it.

We say that Knowledge has an ideal completeness. But what does *ideal* mean? It is a word much used in recent literature, and likely to become still more current, unless its place is supplied by one more expressive. An Ideal means something better than the Actual, but yet inseparable from it; as the magnificent interior of a palace, having the outside also stately and suitable, but still chiefly interesting as suggesting to us that which lies beyond.

The Universe itself looked at with reflection is no doubt ideal enough. It is in one sense too ideal, too remote and abstract to content even the thoughtful student, and for most persons is hardly conceivable at all. Man feels that he too has rights and a place and task in the world, that by its vastness seems to overwhelm us. He endeavours to appropriate to himself, to make his own, whatever suits him in nature, or lies before him as possible and attractive in his own existence. He tries to stamp his own impression on what is nearest to him, and most engages him, to make the Reality a representation of his own Idea, that is, to make it intelligibly, familiarly Ideal. For endless as the opposition is between the Ideal and the Practical, this arises only from the fact that they are altogether inseparable,

that an Ideal result is the aim of every Practical effort. We feel, we all feel, the difficulty of succeeding in this; and the contrast of the wish and the performance shows itself often as a hopeless, always as a toilsome, strife between them. It is a strife that never can come to a conclusion; for when the object of yesterday is gained, when the transient Ideal is realized to-day, the restless hopefulness of the soul will always propose to itself a new and higher one for to-morrow. To idealize in some way our existence, with a greater fulness of outward or of inward good, or into more entire clearness and harmony, is the purpose of all labour, of every law for repressing crime, of every precept for correcting folly, of all beautiful art, nay, of all religions on the earth, which each presents to man, in the mode that suits the age and country, an Eternal Ideal, now of loftier than actual energies, now of pure and divine peace.

To sum the whole in a few words: the aim of the Ideal is Perfection. Then is not Nature perfect? is not this great system of the Divine Wisdom all that it ought to be? Yes, no doubt. But every part and object in Nature is perfect only with reference to the whole. It is our human necessity and privilege to seek in it a perfection relative to ourselves which it can only derive from our shaping Thought. Feeling the Actual insufficient for us, we mould it anew by-

an Ideal pattern. Feeling the Ideal an absolute Law above, a ceaseless fiery spirit within us, we attempt to secure it as our own by embodying it in actual reality.

If I have at all succeeded in explaining my meaning, you will see that the Ideal is something very distinct from the Imaginary. The same power, the Imagination, no doubt works in both, and brings before us that which is not present, or even does not exist, as if we beheld it and were masters of it. But the Imaginary may also be the Impossible, and what we know at the moment is so. For a drooping withered Tree freshness and fulness of vegetation are a genuine Ideal existence. Emerald leaves and fruits of ruby are a mere fantastic sport of Imagination. For the weary suffering sons of men boundless wealth and miraculous wings are incoherent extravagances. But earthly subsistence, and wisdom, and goodness, are for all human beings the true Ideal of their lives.

Now, in this sense, I say that Knowledge, or more expressively Truth,—for Knowledge is Truth received into our Intelligence,—Truth is an Ideal Whole.

It is Ideal inasmuch as it nowhere exists realized. No man that ever lived knew one-hundredth part of the words employed by our own race in their various languages. Not only does the history of the Past come before us only in

some few faint lines and scanty fragments, so that there must have been many great nations on the earth, of whom no man now living has ever heard the name, or can guess the story and character; if we look from nations to individuals, we may remember that, besides the eight hundred millions now upon the globe, there have been all the ancestors of all these, every one of whom has had a life that might have been written, a language, a family, a character, a home, while we possess no records except of a few thousands of persons, and of them know only the merest hints, and often fictitious rumours. But why go to the ends of Space or Time? There is not a friend we have whose whole existence is not to the wisest of us a mass of mystery, streaked here and there with a few dots of light. No one has read a ten-thousandth part of all the books we have. But had I read them all, there are physical laws in the frame, and metaphysical thoughts in the brain, of every peasant and child, which no book has ever taken note of, and on which Philosophy can furnish no theory. Nay, even of human beings we need not speak. There is not a worm upon the ground, not an insect in the air, the compass and depth of whose life does not exceed the measure of the largest mind, and involve conditions that a thousand years of search would not reduce into perfect system. Truth is the explanation of existence, of whatever really is,

and in an unbounded universe needs must be itself an infinite thing. Therefore it is that, turn where we will, and make what advance we can in knowledge, the horizon ever flits and spreads before us, and the most heroic of invaders has still new and newer worlds to conquer.

But, having that characteristic of the Ideal, that it is beyond the Actual, Knowledge has also the other and no less essential, that it is in its own nature, and in part, though not completely, capable of being realized. All is not dream and doubt and ignorance; but there is much that we do positively know.

Volumes, almost libraries, have been written on the endless and chaotic diversities of human opinion. It is a topic which will always afford materials for new volumes and libraries. But these can be of serious value only when it is also confessed and explained that our errors and inconsistencies have a limit to their excess, and a principle of knowledge and certainty running through them. The great visible objects round us, sky, earth, and ocean, plants and animals, evidently make on us the same immediate impression as on our earliest fathers. The changes of day and night, summer and winter, follow their first law. The experience of heat and cold, of the boiling and the freezing of water, the pleasure of all sweet and all beautiful things, and the dread of the hideous and frightful, all

this remains as in the time of the Patriarchs, and builds up a body of common knowledge. Even where variety and inconsistency are most alleged, in the ways and feelings and convictions of mankind, how far more is there of agreement and sympathy! Courage, justice, and compassion continue, in spite of millions of seeming exceptions, to be in esteem from pole to pole, as they have been since the dawn of human existence. Read the oldest records of our race, and you will find the writers holding up to admiration, or relating with heart-felt emotion, the facts that we ourselves the most delight in. The fidelity of Joseph to his master, the love of Hector for his wife and child, come home to our hearts as suddenly as to those of the ancient Hebrew among the Syrian mountains, or the Pagan Greek in the islands of the Ægean sea. In the Indian Code of Menu*, said to be at least three thousand years old, as old as Homer, we find that the husband and all the male relations are strictly enjoined to honour the women: "where women are dishonoured all religious acts become fruitless. Where a husband is contented with his wife and she with her husband, in that house will fortune asssuredly be permanent." A hundred generations of mankind have not changed this. The first Chaldean who observed that the

* Elphinstone, I., 88.

planets seem to journey among the other stars, and not merely to rise and set with them, that Jupiter and Sirius follow different laws, knew a Truth which is now the foundation of Astronomy in London and Paris no less than of old in Babylon. The first Egyptian who, meditating on curved figures, discerned that there is one in which all the lines from one point to the circumference are equal, gained the Idea of a circle, such as it has presented itself to every later mind of man from Thales and Euclid down to Laplace and Herschel. Nay, in truth, those who most exalt the acquirements of our age compared with the Past,—and they can hardly be too much exalted,—must admit that all progress implies Continuity,—that we can take a step forward only by having firm footing for the step behind it.

And as our errors are thus limited historically by a track of knowledge running from age to age, so also our knowledge itself is not a matter of degree, something more or less remote from ignorance, with no distinct line dividing them. There is no doubt an infinite extent of mere blank, where even conjecture fails us; as, for instance, what kinds of animals inhabit the stars. There is another space of doubt and guess, which is a mere question of more or less probability, as the inquiry whether the Druids came into England with its first occupants, and brought their religion with them, or whether it arose within this island

by the gradual increase of reflection among men who at first were brutal savages? Or again, the question whether the art of writing was known among the Greeks in the time of Homer? But even in this region of the uncertain there is nothing which we may not possibly and very conceivably come to know. Lastly, within these two great zones,—first, that which we cannot, secondly, that which we do not know,—there is a third domain of light, that which we actually and certainly *do* know, and which for us can never possibly cease to be true.

According to a well-known story, some Sidonian mariners, probably at least a thousand years before our era, were carrying a cargo of natron, or native carbonate of soda, extensively used for its cleansing properties, as wood-ashes are now. They were sailing along the coast of Syria, and landed to cook their food at the mouth of a stream flowing down from the Mount Carmel of Scripture. They took some lumps of the natron from their boat, and used them as stones to set their cauldron on. The fire which they kindled beneath melted the soda and the flint-sand of the shore, and, to the astonishment of these Sidonians, formed a shining liquid, which cooled and hardened, and was found to be transparent. This was the first invention of glass. It was soon manufactured by the Egyptians, and is found abundantly in their tombs. But the pro-

cess has been so improved, and the wealth of mankind so much increased, that every English cottage is now better supplied than were the palaces of the East or of Rome. Still however it is as true as it was three thousand years ago, that alkali and silex fused together will form a hard transparent substance like the crystals of nature.

Nor is this kind of fact discredited by the changes of fashion and of art. The same commercial race had of old the skill to stain cloth red by the liquor obtained from a shell-fish; and hence the celebrated Tyrian dye, the most splendid ornament of queens, and used even for the draperies of the Gods. We produce a similar colour more easily, cheaply, and perfectly, by the cochineal insect which we import from Mexico. But the bright-red colour is still pleasant to the eye, and might still be obtained from the same animal which of old yielded it. Our knowledge has indeed grown wonderfully; but the oldest fact is fact to-day and for ever.

Nor would the moral history of Man, could we here enter on it, afford any sufficient arguments against the unchangeableness of the Laws which govern our existence and the world around us. In Knowledge of our own nature, and of our relations to the highest Truths, there have been many great revolutions as well as innumerable unmarked fluctuations, and on the whole, no doubt, immense progress. But still the funda-

mental tendencies of the soul to faith, reverence, sympathy, to the symbolic expression, and the philosophical comprehension of all higher Ideas, have shown themselves under all these modifications,—taking history as a whole,—and have worked ceaselessly forward to fuller and purer development. After the lapse of thirty centuries, and the enormous changes in belief and insight that these have brought, the feeling that prompted, the thought that shaped the language of the Indian Vedas, the rites of Egyptian temples, and the prayer of the Homeric Agamemnon, remain for us a serious and ennobling portion of our own inmost hearts.

The conclusion we must come to, how imperfectly soever it has been now maintained, is that, in the midst of the unknown waste around us, we have a distinct field of Knowledge, and that, although this be girt in by a belt of the uncertain and merely probable, its centre is filled with undoubted positive light, the native and familiar home of human Reason.

We may thus see that Truth is an Ideal,—something in its nature capable of being realized, mastered, and enjoyed as our own, and yet also leaving always something, nay much beyond and above us, which allures us on to further efforts.

It was called an Ideal Whole,—not a heap of unconnected parts and fragments, but that which has a oneness, and is essentially inseparable.

Nobody who reflects on Truth at all, can doubt this; but it is desirable to bring it before our minds as a distinct Idea.

Let any one look into himself, and he will find all that he knows lying before his understanding, and capable of being reviewed in succession, so that there is no thought within us from which we may not pass to any other thought. No conceptions are so incongruous, that we cannot link them together and bring them at once before us. From the knowledge of the first rules of arithmetic we may leap at pleasure,—nay, unless you stop your ears you must leap at my pleasure,—from the thought of the multiplication table to that of Satan's address to the Sun in Milton, and thence to the conquest of England by the Normans, and thence to the cabbages in a garden, and thence to the steam-vessels in America,—and so on without limit. And I have chosen these images at random to show that there are none too unconnected for the oneness of the mind to combine them into one, when it has the smallest call to do so. For there is a oneness in our consciousness and in all the objects with which it deals.

But this, it may be said, is nothing more than an accidental outward oneness impressed upon the objects of our thoughts by our act in thinking of them. It might be shown that this is impossible, that they could not be reviewed by us as one, unless there were a previous oneness in the things them-

selves, a oneness in the conditions and principles of their existence. But, as this consideration may be too abstruse for many, it seems better to point out how every department of our knowledge loses itself at its boundaries in some neighbouring portion of Truth, and to show how impossible it is to divide Knowledge into separate unconnected scraps.

I have a field with three straight sides, and only three, of which I desire to draw an exact plan. Measuring the length of each of the three sides, I at once draw a map of the whole field on paper, without copying the shapes of the angles where the sides join each other. How can I do this? I do it because I know from the study of geometry that the length of the three sides of a triangle fixes the shapes that the corners must have. I run over in my mind the definitions of a straight line, an angle, and a triangle, and then the steps of the proof by which mathematicians make out this truth. From hence I might go on to survey the whole of geometry, which is obviously but an extension of the same kind of inquiry. But instead of this, as I want to be certain of the accuracy of the plan of my field, I begin to consider how it is that I know the arguments of the mathematicians to be true? how it comes that there is any connection between the thoughts of the old Egyptian and Greek geometers and my field here in Cornwall? This

leads to the examination of my understanding itself; and I reflect on the powers of our minds, and the relation of our thoughts to the world around us, and on the kind of belief which we have and ought to have in our own reason. But this is nothing else than what is commonly called Metaphysics, but more properly Philosophy. Hence I meditate on the history of such speculations,—on the comparative merits of different teachers of these truths,—on the schools of modern Germany, thence on those of England and France in the seventeenth century,—thence on the Schoolmen before the Reformation,—and so back to the Philosophers of Greece, who followed Socrates, till I have before me an ontline of the inquiries of the human race into the reality and possible compass of our Knowledge. But does Thought stop here, and find an ultimate wall at the tombs of Pythagoras and Heraclitus? No, we are here after so long a journey apparently at the beginning of one great period as well as at the end of another. For from the history of Greek inquiry, the hierarchy proposed by Pythagoras, and the deeply religious character of the Asiatic Heraclitus, I am led inevitably to the priestly doctrines and the old oracular speculations of the East, which propose to give us intellectual certainty in the form of religious inspiration. And when we are now engaged in the study of primeval religions, does this again close the course of Thought, and leave me to rest

on the impassable threshold of a supernatural temple? Ah! no: for I must ask, are the doctrines of Egypt, Chaldea, and India, are the ancient rivers of belief that have flowed and will flow farther than Nile, Euphrates, and Ganges, are they in turn but waters left by some still earlier retiring flood of purer truth, or do they spring from their several sufficient fountains, and feed with increasing streams the rivulets of all the younger earth? These questions must be asked; for on the solution of them depends in turn the importance we shall assign to the doctrines of the East. And how must this be settled? We plunge into the wilderness of early legend and tradition, and, finding no contentment here, are driven to examine the probabilities of the case, and find that the history of mankind renders probable the diffusion of the race from an Asiatic centre. Probable, not certain: and to help our belief we inquire into the physical structure of those regions, and from their geography are driven to examine their geological formation, on which indeed all geography rests, and which alone can tell us whether four thousand years ago the banks of the Euphrates were a rich and open region friendly to man, and capable of supplying his wants even in the infancy of his powers. But how can we stop at the geology of Asia? The plants, the animals, the climate, from which the study of the astronomy is inseparable, all these

lead us into their several diverging tracks. Again, the history of the primitive races of man opens the whole region of Thought where we investigate the structure and functions of the Mind. And from any of these branches of inquiry we may make a short cut back to Cornwall, and ask, to which of the earliest divisions of mankind the people of this island probably belonged? Or from the geology we may return to the field we started from, and compare our strata with those of the countries round the Persian Gulf. While to perform a more complete analysis of our rocks and earths, we have all modern chymistry at hand, and must pass from the field into the laboratory, and rest from our journey round the globe in the study of yet another science in the hall of the Polytechnic Society.

It would be easy to occupy many hours with similar demonstrations, that every science we know, or know of, connects itself with every other, and with that great whole of Knowledge which has before been described to you as an Ideal for ever tending to shape itself into clear and complete certainty. But it will be more to our purpose to say something of the estimation that Knowledge deserves from us, the second great topic of which I proposed to treat.

Truth is not made for man, but man for Truth, —a saying which it were well if we could write in letters of fire on every human soul. Truth is

not made for man, but man for Truth. This universe, with its millions of orbs, does not exist merely that we may crawl and talk on the surface of the planet Earth. Nor are all the laws of Nature perpetually working their embroidered webs only to amuse our eyes and clothe our nakedness; but we are here to use, so far as we can for our own benefit, that which exists independently of us, and to understand the order and feel the greatness of the scheme of being in which our place is fixed.

To do this, to know the meaning and connection of the realities around us and of our own nature, has ever been an ennobling delight for men. There never has been an age, never except among bestial savages, a tribe entirely ignorant that Knowledge is a blessing to the soul, and not merely a toy for amusement, or a tool for gain. It furnishes indeed abundant pleasure as a mere gratification, and, as all the useful arts and manufactures, of which this country is a storehouse, sufficiently prove, is the most effectual of all helps to the acquisition of riches; but human nature asks for something more than either pleasure or profit; and Truth is ever at hand, a veiled indeed, and reserved, but inseparable attendant, to furnish us with all the higher food we need.

Read the account of the wonder and ecstacy of the savage when a missionary wrote his name at his dictation, and the dusky chieftain took the

paper to another European, and was amazed at hearing read the very word he had desired. His astonishment and rapture of joy proceeded not at all from any reflections on the value of writing as a useful art, the most useful of all except language, or from any vision of a library, a newspaper, and a post-office; but the new and great idea of this unknown power in man burst upon him like the dawn of day, and flashed upon his obscure thought the conception of a luminous law.

There is a story in the history of England, told, I think, originally by Bede, so justly called the Venerable, which is as striking and affecting in its way as any of those deeds of heroic patriotism that enrich the annals of Greece and Rome.

More than twelve hundred years ago, when the north-eastern part of England was occupied by the Pagan Angles, or people of Jutland and Holstein, who had conquered it from the old Celtic population, a Christian missionary from Rome endeavoured to introduce his better faith among these rude and bloody men. The council of the chiefs was assembled round their king. Paulinus spoke; and at last one of the warriors said: "The soul of man is like a sparrow, which in a winter night, when the king with his men is sitting by the warm fire, enters for a moment from the storm and darkness, flits through the lighted hall, and then passes again into the black night. Thus," he said, "our life shoots across the world; but whence it comes

and whither it goes we cannot tell. If then the new doctrine can give us any certainty, O king, let us receive it with joy." In this simple and earnest fashion does the unappeasable longing of man for knowledge speak itself out of the dim barbarian soul.

Thus it is that in all periods of history men supposed pre-eminently wise have been held in esteem, nay in awe, by those around them. To exhibit this fact in all its phases and developments would be to write the best part of the history of the world. Much of what is most interesting and important in the subject may be found stated with admirable fervour and depth of spirit in a recent volume of Mr. Carlyle's on Heroes and Hero-Worship. It will be sufficient here to call your attention to a single period of the past, about six hundred years before Christ, when Zoroaster, Confucius, and Gautama or Sakya-Muni, commonly called Buddha, when Pythagoras and Solon, were all nearly contemporaries.

I have chosen this period chiefly because it is the very earliest in history which presents to us distinct individual characters of men intellectually great. Others, their compeers, must have preceded them at least in Egypt and in India; as is proved by the great political and religious institutions, the magnificent symbolic arts, and the advanced state of society that existed long before the age that I refer to. But of these earlier sages

and masters of the soul of man we have no certain knowledge, except in the prodigious results of their mental energy.

Of the men I have named the earliest was probably Zoroaster the Mede, whose life filled, I believe, the latter half of the seventh century before our era, from six hundred and fifty to six hundred years before Christ. He was one of the greatest of those teachers of the East, who gained their power, not, as too many foolishly fancy, by fraud, or in the main by violence, but by imparting to those around them better knowledge on the highest objects than had before prevailed. It seems likely that we possess a portion of the writings of this thoughtful man, which have been translated into French and German. His system was secured and consecrated in the only way then possible, by the establishment or perpetuation of a priesthood, with very cumbrous rites. But essentially it contained an idea capable of surviving all external institutions, and which actually at this hour subsists. The old religion of the tribe Zoroaster belonged to seems to have consisted chiefly in the adoration of fire, as the symbol of what is divine in Nature, flame being to all mankind the most beautifully attractive and mysterious of all natural objects not alive. But out of this faith the meditation of Zoroaster seems to have evolved the profound thought of a double principle and a conflict of two hostile powers, as

manifested in all existence. Observing and feeling this fact more deeply than all around him, he generalized and heightened it into the doctrine of two Powers or Beings, the good Ormuzd and the evil Ahriman. But he did not leave it to man which of these we should follow, but taught that it is the whole and only task of our life to make the good victorious over the evil, and that a time shall come when, the victory being finally achieved, the universe shall rise from its long and painful purification into perfect stainless light. The sins of the wicked shall have been blotted out by tremendous punishment; and they shall themselves be re-united to the good in an eternity of bliss.

Keep clearly before you that I am not comparing these doctrines with our better knowledge; but conceive them proclaimed as truth to the rude, wild, and ignorant men, in the simplicity of the early world; and we see that it is no sottish dream of mere savages, no frantic superstition of bloody barbarians, but may well secure to Zoroaster the place that his name holds among the primeval sages of mankind.

The fate of his doctrine,—of the knowledge that he poured over the blank ignorance of his country, has been no less remarkable than the man. It continued to be in the main the religion of Media and Persia for about thirteen centuries, until almost extirpated by the Mahometan con-

querors, the professors of a creed purer no doubt and loftier than his. At this day it is held as their fundamental faith by the Parsees of Bombay, perhaps the most upright and intelligent of all the natives of our Indian empire. One of these persons was lately, probably is now, in England, attended at the Plymouth meeting of the British Association, and made a speech in English. Others of the same race and tenets have travelled in this country, and published a very striking book, containing their observations. They seem to have been particularly impressed by the extent to which the fire, that Zoroaster worshipped on the Median hills, is used among us for the purposes of the arts, and especially in impelling steam-machinery. The great English mercantile houses at Bombay have generally at least one Parsee partner professing this old creed, and whose belief in Ormuzd is sufficient to keep alive in his whole conduct both a high degree of benevolence and the most conscientious integrity.

The person of whom I must next speak is Sakya-Muni, the founder of the Buddhist religion, which now prevails more extensively than any other in the world, spreading over all the nations between India and China, and to the north of both these countries and in China itself, and numbering at least three hundred millions of followers. He was a native of India, who, in that land of castes and idols, taught a less mythological,

less symbolical, less priestly scheme than Brahminism. He made a long step forward in the history of human intelligence in the East, teaching not perhaps a purer idea of the Deity than might be found in the Brahmin books, but throwing open to all his followers that enlightenment, which the Brahmins only conveyed obscurely through means of images and sculptured temples, and expressive rites and ceremonies. In spite of the mass of folly and some fraud that has been connected with the Buddhist system, it is impossible to read the philosophical speculations, the grand ideal view of existence, and the practical precepts of truth, purity, and mercy, contained in the scriptures of the sect, and, comparing them with the notions and superstitions of barbarous tribes and of the savages whom our missionaries describe, not to feel veneration for the old teacher whose name is now held in honour by a third part of the human race. His knowledge was small indeed contrasted with ours, but wonderfully greater than that of the races whom he instructed, and of millions of human beings at this hour.

According to the date of Gautama which I believe in,—for there are very various traditions and computations,—he was contemporary with Confucius, the great master of Chinese wisdom, a man whose own writings, said to be indubitable, we still possess. His idea of man, and of our duties and destiny, though far less abstract and

awful than that revealed to the Hebrews, is neither a mean nor a dark one; for he divides the whole of existence into a Heaven above us, an Earth below, and a Divine Reason in the midst, impersonated as man. But in his tone and turn of mind and practical tendencies Confucius very closely resembles the American Franklin, though with more of reverence and of family affection than the modern seems to have been inspired with. A spirit of good sense, benevolence, and uprightness runs through his system, and almost an indifference to those deeper and more sublime considerations, which form the substance of all the old Eastern religions, except among this Mongol race, and with which ours has happily made us familiar. But what should especially be noticed is this, that we have here a man who, without any warlike violence, and without any marvellous imposture, by the mere force of his honest intelligence of human nature, and its needs and powers, by teaching and writing some books, has made himself the light and law of the whole Chinese people for a period of more than two thousand years. Attila and Genghis are gone. Even Napoleon has become in one quarter of a century little more than a stupendous monument of the past; but the works of Confucius are the household companions of all the learned in a country where learning is held in more general honour and is more widely spread than it has ever

been anywhere else on earth. His precepts are the real daily guides of human life for that enormous population, and are at least professed as their own invariable system by the Tartars, who have conquered and now rule the land. It is curious to add that the descendants of Confucius are undoubtedly the oldest traceable family on the earth, and are now held in high honour in the very province and in the city that he himself inhabited.

About the same time as Gautama and Confucius, lived in the distant West, in Greece, and among the Greeks of southern Italy, the Samian Pythagoras, an immortal name, were it only that he, first of men, called himself a *philosopher*, a lover of wisdom. His genius and attainments are more strikingly shown in the influence that he personally exercised, and in the wondrous tales of which, in after belief, he was the hero, than in almost anything that can now be proved with regard to his doctrines. Nor can we here attempt any account of his life, his tenets, or his practical aims, beyond the remark that he seems to have been the first and most signal of all the eminent persons, who, after the disappearance from their country of the primitive priestly systems, have attempted to form new and somewhat similar communities of their own, and to put the management of human affairs entirely into the hands of a college of wise men: but then they were of course

to be wise men of his own peculiar type, in advance no doubt, in many respects, of their age, but whose power, if perpetuated, would inevitably make them, or their descendants, the tyrants of that intelligence which they propose to exercise and enlighten. It was well for the Greeks, and it is well for us, that no project has ever been completely or long successful for forcing men to think always according to an unchangeable pattern, and submit themselves for ever to any corporate class of teachers.

In the same age lived a man whose name is commonly held less memorable than that of Pythagoras in the history of thought, but whose political efforts were more successful. His character also is extremely winning by its mild firmness and graceful good sense, not unlike, though far superior to our English Sir Thomas More. I mean the Athenian Solon. More,—on the whole the most illustrious victim ever put to death in England on account or on the pretext of religion,—could only imagine an ideal commonwealth, and explain, not embody, his fair visions of human wisdom and happiness in that Utopia, which, like the Quixote of the Spaniard, has furnished an adjective of reproach against the benefactors of mankind, that is a noble praise of him who conceived its original. Solon also in his old age, as More in his youth, described an imaginary blissful polity. But the Greek had beforehand enacted, not merely

fancied, not the best, but the best practicable laws, and bequeathed them with his pure and lofty fame to Athens. To them and him much doubtless, we know not how much, is owing of that political vigour and intellectual beauty, which in their combination have made Attica, though a country much smaller than Cornwall, be of all spots on earth, except Palestine, incomparably the most fertile of lasting and priceless benefits to man.

But, though a few instances out of many which offer themselves, have thus illustrated the importance of Knowledge, or of systematic reflection, which is Knowledge, in the history of mankind, it may still be said that these and the like are all instances of men of transcendant genius. This no doubt is true. It also seems that in the East generally, and to a great extent in the old classical world, the possibility of obtaining any but practical knowledge has been limited, not only by the natural incapacity of many minds and by hindering circumstances, but also by positive laws and customs, forbidding all beyond some select class to employ themselves in the pursuit of wisdom. In India to this day learning and speculation are the privilege of the Brahmins, among whom also Thought itself is rather a dead ornament than a living force. In Greece and Rome a multitude of the people were slaves, and of course had as little of mental as of bodily freedom; and from the scarcity of books when printing was

unknown, no one could learn much beyond the popular religious traditions and the routine of his own trade, unless possessed of rare advantages, and able to devote himself almost entirely to study. China indeed has had the art of printing much longer than Europe; and there Knowledge is in the hands of no priestly caste, but is itself on the other hand very limited in extent. For of all the sciences conversant with the structure of the world, and with organic nature, and with the constitution of the human mind, they know actually nothing, and nothing of all history except that of their own empire. Now the peculiar character of Europe in our age seems to be twofold,—first, that Knowledge exists among us with a hundred times the fulness and accuracy it has ever gained elsewhere: and secondly, that this unexampled range of thought lies before every human being, far indeed from perfectly open, but still so that no very energetic mind need fail to take full advantage of it, and that every one shares more or less in its benefits. Gross, unreflecting, and semi-barbarous as crowds among us are, Europe has never known a time when nearly the same proportion of its people have had access to nearly so wide an expanse of Knowledge.

But the very wideness of the range will to many seem a reason against all attempt at exploring it. Not only ideally, and looking at Knowledge as a possibility, but as a practical fact,

with regard to so much truth as man has brought into clear intellectual light, and as is well worth our study, it is undeniable that this undertaking is far beyond the strength of any man. Of course for any but a few, and those recluse students, the possibilities of Knowledge lie within very narrow limits. The mass of mankind have neither the extent of mind even to imagine Science as a Whole, nor the outward opportunities of leisure, books, and the like, for learning more than a very little of what others have ascertained.

Is it then an idle attempt to lay before you even a rude sketch of human Thought, when the greater number can hope to share so lightly in its full enjoyment? I think not. It seems the great object to show that there is such a better land as that of Truth, lying more or less within reach of all, and where all may gain a secure footing, though few may visit even those parts that others have traversed, and none can ever examine the whole.

With what curious and fascinated eyes must the emigrant about to sail for America ponder often over the map of that great continent, tracing here the course of the Mississippi and Orellana, there feeling as if he lost his breath at the sight of the immeasurable Cordilleras of the Andes, and sweeping on the wings of sudden thought from the flowery forests of Brazil and Chili to the dreadful seas of either pole. Yet in

this empire of Columbus and Cortez, of Penn and Washington, the emigrant all the while well knows that he himself shall drive the plough and lay his bones in some quiet valley of Canada or Ohio, and no more rival the wanderings of a Humboldt, than you who dwell in Europe are likely to search with your own eyes every stream and village of our continent between the Bosphorus and the Baltic Sea.

As the map of America before the intending emigrant, so may you keep before you some faint and general conception of that great Intellectual Whole, of which some little dell or corner is all that you can each of you make your home.

The greatness of the object, its variousness and height and wondrous reality, should be to all a ground of hopeful earnest interest, not of despairing amazement, if you will only guide yourselves by this clear idea, that for every human soul Knowledge has some side on which it is open and delightful of approach, though requiring always patient and laborious thought. There is no practical art, which is not rooted in a science, and may not connect itself with a deep and complex theory. Mathematics and Mechanics are the sciences of carpentry and building. The theory of colour and of the beautiful ought to engage the tailor and the house-painter. When education is somewhat more advanced, the truth of this doctrine will be understood by all. But, independently of

this outward use, there is in every one an inward capacity for and tendency to some kind of intellectual pursuit, chosen beforehand by Providence and Nature as an ideal vocation for each of us. The physical sciences, and the whole sphere of natural history, and the yet more varied and impressive history of man, and all the finer arts and nobler relations of human beings to each other and all above them,—all these supply not one or ten, but hundreds of reasonable and beautiful and sublime inquiries, by one or other of which, if not by several, before many generations are past, every one in civilized countries will be enlightened, at least as certainly as they are now supplied with food or clad with garments.

Finally, the impression that I most would wish to leave upon your minds is this, that every one who tries to connect his daily task, however mean, with the highest thoughts he can apprehend, thereby secures the rightfulness of his work, and is raising his own existence to its utmost perfection. Such I wish to be the last words I utter here; and they might fitly be the last that I should speak on earth; for, understood and laid to heart, they include the whole true law of human life. Let me repeat them again: He who tries to connect his daily task, however mean, with the highest thoughts he can apprehend, thereby secures the rightfulness of his work, and is raising his existence to its utmost good.

These words sound no doubt vague and dark to many, and to some perhaps seem trivial and common-place. Vague and dark they must remain for all who do not endeavour to realize them in practice in the whole of life. Common-place, that is, at once obvious and shallow, they never can be to any, unless they are entirely misconceived. Truly labour to connect your work, however lowly, with the highest thoughts that you are aware of, and towards which your heart obscurely feels; and you yourself are a far nobler being than he whose place and business among mankind are the grandest, but who lives with thoughts and in a spirit below his outward lot. Or, to say the same thing in other words,—for it were well to impress upon the hearts of all what concerns the cobbler and the sailor no less than the prelate or statesman:—

With tasks, however mean, connect a thought
Beyond the thing, and they shall well be wrought;
And for yourself mean toil contains all good,
If truth not mean therein is understood:
For 'tis the purpose of the mind alone,
That gilds a three-legged stool, or dims a throne.
If yonder skies with grovelling soul we spell,
Our own conceit is all the tale they tell;
But mark on dust three scratches with a rod,
And Wisdom's hand has traced the name of God.
To lowly toil bring meditative power,
And find the Infinite in each small hour.

To raise and to enlarge the mind by knowledge is the special purpose of these Lectures: to raise it above the sordidness of mere money-making, of sensual enjoyment, and of lazy frivolity: to enlarge it beyond the narrow bounds in which the practical routine of labour and business would otherwise shut it up. That this good should be in some degree accomplished for all our hearers by the instruction that will here be given, there is but one condition that I know of necessary, which is, that you should love Knowledge for its own sake, and not merely for the vanity of knowing more than others, or for the outward benefits to be gained from it in the affairs of life. Love Knowledge as in itself a good, as that which our minds are constituted to receive and enjoy, and in possessing and extending which they feel at home tranquil and energetic. For Knowledge and outward activity are, as well as reverential feeling, means by which we bring ourselves into contact with the widening circles of that whole frame of existence which we belong to. For most of us practical effort of some kind is rendered necessary by the circumstances in which we are placed; and some sort of higher instinct teaches us to adore; but beyond what little knowledge our work implies, and the forms and phrases of a higher wisdom, now to many a mere dead tradition, the universe and the being of man

remain to some men a colourless blank, and a mute void, or at best a vague and shifting cloud that changes its aspect at the will of all our passions and fancies. I feel that the wish I am about to utter is far too rash and aspiring; for, if realized, it would make this assemblage the centre of light for all the world. Yet I must say: Would that all might try with earnest freedom to use their best powers for the best objects,—not those which are prescribed as best by this or that system, or by one or other dogmatic teacher, but for those ends which we truly, silently feel do fully and with no equivocal joy engage and expand the reasonable soul within us. Let us learn in such measure as our faculties and opportunities permit, that Nature and Mankind are a great Whole, of which the individual is but a small atomic part, and which only when conceived if not thoroughly understood as a Whole, exalts and warms us out of the petty selfishness that unfits us for our noblest duties, and dwarfs us to the stature of our consciousness. Connect, I say again, your daily tasks with the greatest thoughts you know of, and thereby secure the rightfulness of your work, and raise yourselves to the highest pitch of vigour and of truth.

Take this, my friends, as the last expression of a sincere good-will:

> The World of God above us and below
> Is here for Man to work in and to know.

But, like a ghost on Time's funereal brink,
Flits the pale Reason uninspired to think.
Spread free your wings and soar to Truth's great star:
Nor be your Thoughts less than your birthrights are.

END OF VOL. I.

HARRISON AND CO., PRINTERS, 45, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

00047865

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 13 February, 2016